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Feet to the flame

The Standing Rock stand-off has cooled for now, but the Morton County Sheriff Department continues to stoke the flames, posting a video series to their Twitter page called "Know the Truth" that seeks to change public understanding of the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the first video of the series, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier sets the frame: "These are short narratives that will tell you the real story."

In one video, Cass County Sheriff Paul D. Laney says of the water protectors: "A lot of the times, the militant ones will disguise themselves in there and the next thing we know, what we thought was going to be peaceful or prayerful, now they're coming for us."

The sheriffs' framing is manifestly biased, of course. This is because, as contributor Phillip Dwight Morgan writes in this issue's cover story, "police serve to enforce dominant class rule." Dominant class rule is served when those who resist capital, police presence, and surveillance are cast as violent, unlawful, and unreasonable.

Why should it matter that the Morton County Sheriff's Department tweeted these videos? Because while police take to social media to directly disseminate their messages to communities, critical journalism is in freefall. This is not to say that journalists have failed to cover the resistance to DAPL; the events have been well reported by independent journalists and frontline reporters and by independent media venues like *Democracy Now!* and *Unicorn Riot*. Even some mainstream venues provided thorough coverage. But overall, mainstream journalism is simply not holding the feet of power elites to the flame.

Police framing will always reinforce its own legitimacy, but when abuses go

unreported, their self-serving narrative will be the only side of the story many folks hear.

The Indymedia Montreal 2016 Convergence Group (see "Holding Out for Un-alienated Communication" in this issue) convincingly argues that corporate media cannot simply can't be trusted to ask the hard questions our collective survival depends upon. History has taught us that mainstream media is critical of protestors; at the WTO meetings in Seattle, for example, the mainstream media offered "stereotyped spectacle of violent activists clashing with police at the expense of reporting on social justice issues," writes the group. Reporting on stories involving Indigenous resistance to colonial policies and events is often particularly distorted. As Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen Robertson write in *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (2011), "Colonial representations as common sense, naturalized and totalized, comprise the guts of what reflects Canada's past and present colonial imaginary in the printed press."

Activists have generated awesome success in recent years by "being the media" and reporting from the front lines of movements on social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. But the impulse to funnel all of our activism through social media requires our critical attention. Social media, after all, introduces powerful mechanisms of surveillance that activists would be remiss to ignore.

As Nickita Longman notes in her article "Deep Cuts" in this issue, Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum has noticed that employees of the logging company responsible for clear cutting her land are surveilling her on Twitter, possibly monitoring when she is away from home. More surreptitious surveillance has taken place at Standing Rock, where protectors

have reported that Gmail accounts were hacked and Stingray technology was likely deployed by police to monitor phones and cut data signals. Surveillance not only intimidates and interferes, but also enables companies to collect the personal information of users. The Indymedia Convergence Group writes, "One investor [of the CIA's venture capital wing, In-Q-Tel] recently referred to the user data captured through social media as 'the new oil.'"

While the Indymedia network is building technologies that can facilitate grassroots reporting without surveillance or corporate interference, we cannot ignore the way that power is constructed and maintained outside of these networks. In his story on police officers stationed in high schools across Toronto, Morgan points out that school resource officers, as they're called, "are well-resourced police officers. Perhaps by accurately naming their positions, we can begin to cut through their authority."

We should continue to develop our understanding of the role of the surveillance industry in social media. The achievements of grassroots reporting and the "Know the Truth" videos reveal the uncomfortable truth that social media is a powerful tool both for and against social movements. Our ability to build stable movements rooted in accurate information and solid analysis depends on our understanding of that very relationship. ★

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CORRECTION

In our last issue's masthead, we misattributed the credits of the cover image. The photograph is by Clayton Conn. We apologize to the photographer for this error.



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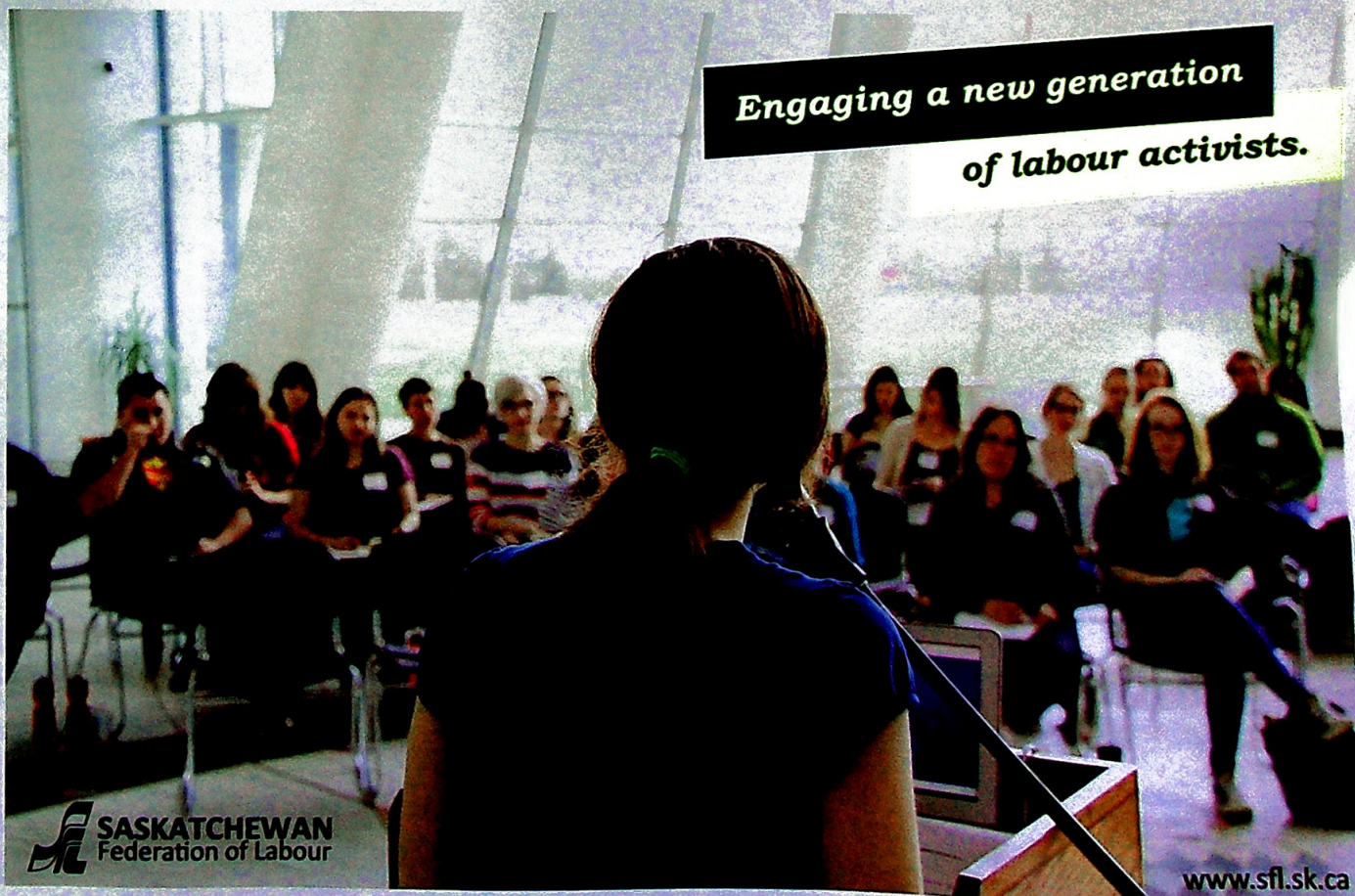
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DEEP CUTS

Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum's fight against
the clearcutting of her land

BY NICKITA LONGMAN
PHOTOS BY EAGLECLAW THOM





A few hours north of Saskatoon, the trees become thicker and the air fresher, although the winding highways and grid roads remind me that modern-day transportation is undoubtedly an intrusion and I am only a guest here. Each visit I've made in the past year has revealed stark evidence that such robust beauty does not go untouched in the pursuit of profit.

I was once ignorant to the greed that fuels the destruction of these stolen forests, trees, and wildlife. But after a few days on the land, away from the city, I continue to learn from one of the territory's traditional titleholders the hard reality of clearcutting and forest degradation.

Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum*, one of the founders of Idle No More, is welcoming each time I visit. With a warm voice and fierce values, Sylvia is a patient host who shows me first-hand the ways in which her home is under attack.

After spending a couple of days with Sylvia over the past year, it's apparent that the roots of her resistance and the foundation for her work with Idle No More are heavily embedded in her family's traditional Nêhiyaw hunting grounds, tucked away deep in the boreal forest on Treaty 6 territory. "It's beautiful here," she tells me. "There's nowhere else I'd rather be."

Sylvia's earliest years were atypical for someone of her generation. She and her siblings avoided residential school, educated instead on their father's hunting territory where land-based education mirrored that of a long line of traditional hunters who were all born, raised, and buried on the territory.

With a father from the Wind Clan and a mother from the Eagle Clan, Sylvia didn't speak a word of English until kindergarten. Although her traditional history extends beyond the

borders of a reserve, Sylvia's family are members of what is now called the Big River First Nation, a reserve along the southern edge of the Prince Albert Forest Management Area. That land is home to trembling aspen, pine, spruce, balsam, fir, poplar, and birch, all now under threat of clearcutting. Until nearly 18 years ago, Sylvia's father's hunting cabin was tucked away deep in the bush. Sylvia tells me it had been burnt down in the late 1990s, and her family's wasn't the only one. "My father's hunting territory is two full days of walking in each direction," she noted. Now, all that remains is an emptied-out space in the land where the cabin and surrounding forest once existed.

CUTTING AWAY AT THE LAND

Clearcutting is the commercial removal of healthy trees. Throughout our tours of the land, Sylvia directs attention to

**In keeping with the author's request, we refer to Saysewahum by her first name throughout.*



Sylvia McAdam Saysewahum on her traditional territory

the growing number of emptied-out locations where flourishing forests were once her playground.

During my most recent visit, Sylvia shows me where she sleeps. After relocating a few times due to safety concerns and clearcutting exposure, she feels safer in her latest location. Next to a small body of water, her home is surrounded by the sounds of untouched nature, interrupted only when Sylvia builds a small fire with the wood that immediately surrounds the site.

Sylvia believes that the Natural Resources Transfer Act, signed in 1930, was the start of the clearcutting. The act placed First Nations' reserve land under the Crown, guaranteeing that natural resources, even on reserves, are "administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of Canada." It's one of many "colonial apparatuses the government uses to assert jurisdiction over our lands," says Sylvia.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

In 2010, the Saskatchewan government entered into a 20-year forest management agreement (FMA) with Sakâw Askiy Management Inc. (Sakâw). The FMA granted the company a licence to harvest the forest in the Prince Albert Forest Management Area, which encompasses 3.3 million hectares of boreal forest north of Prince Albert. Typically, in order to receive a commercial licence to harvest timber, a forestry company is required to develop a forest management plan that explains to the Ministry of Environment how the company has consulted with affected Indigenous people, and how it will ensure a "sustainable rate of harvest." Companies that receive FMAs also usually commit to forest renewal obligations. If FMAs are approved, companies are granted operating plans.

Sakâw represents eight shareholder companies, including six companies with manufacturing facilities, and two First Nations businesses. Each shareholder has been granted harvest allocations, and Sakâw reports on their operations.

A.C. Forestry, located near Big River First Nation, is the shareholder with allocations closest to Sylvia's traditional hunting grounds.

"Sakâw Askiy began collecting operating plans from [the Ministry of]

on the territory alone. During the late summer of 2016, she noticed shotgun holes through a sign she had put up that read, "No Clearcutting."

"My grandson has stopped coming to the lands with me. He doesn't feel

"My father's hunting territory is two full days of walking in each direction," she described. Now, all that remains is an emptied-out space in the land where the cabin and surrounding forest once existed.

Environment to begin clearcutting," Sylvia says. These plans, in the form of contracts, bypassed band members and were approved in May 2012 by the chiefs and councils of surrounding reserves Pelican Lake, Big River, and Witchehan Lake. According to Sylvia, the Big River chief and council rarely consult with their band members in approving operating plans. At a community meeting held with band members, chief and council, and the Ministry of Environment, Sylvia learned that the chiefs from Pelican Lake, Big River, and Witchehan Lake – the same reserves that approved the Sakâw's plans without consulting members – sit as directors of A.C. Forestry.

During the fall of 2015, on the heels of the federal election, Sylvia says the clearcutting process became "a frenzy" and "a total land-grab." The transition to a new government, she explained, created uncertainty. "The atmosphere becomes unclear and unstable [during the transition]. Extractive industries move quickly to get as much as they can before changes are made," she says.

Sylvia doesn't oppose logging altogether; what she objects to is the lack of consultation of the traditional land-owners, the excessive extraction, and the waste of otherwise healthy trees.

WHAT'S THE COST?

Sylvia's defence of the land hasn't always been without risk. At times, Sylvia is

safe anymore," she says. Shortly after he stopped joining her, her tent went missing. Then she found out that employees of the nearby logging companies follow her on social media, where she posts often about her struggle against the clearcutting. While these posts allow her to draw broad attention to the issue, they also reveal when she is home or away.

Sylvia now carries a gun with her for protection. "If farmers can carry guns to defend their lands, why can't Indigenous women?"

DEEP IMPACTS

The forestry industry is northern Saskatchewan's second largest industry, generating over \$1 billion in forest product sales and \$800 million in exports. Sylvia is all too aware of the effects of this industry on people and wildlife.

"These companies clear cut [and profit from the wood that's used] to build homes, while my people are still homeless." Sylvia herself sleeps in her trailer, but even now, she is without a home in the city or on her reserve.

In an environment of wind chills that reach as low as -50 °C, the boreal forest protects vegetation and wildlife. Clearcutting forces wildlife to travel farther to find food. When trees are clear cut, the carbon that is usually stored in trees, soil, peat, and moss is released into the atmosphere.

"[The clearcutting has] changed the water," Sylvia explains. "[And] when I

wake up in the morning, I don't hear the birds anymore. Where are we going to get our feathers for ceremony? Where are we going to get our food for ceremony? Even the medicine has been displaced." The deer in the surrounding area, she has noticed, have become "sickly and thin."

BOREAL CLEARCUTTING

In many ways, Sylvia isn't alone in her struggle because boreal clearcutting isn't limited to Saskatchewan.

Métis artist Christi Belcourt, who lives in northern Ontario's Espanola, says, "[A] majority of people reside in southern Ontario and are not aware that clearcutting is happening all over Ontario."

Christi sees its harsh effects in nearby decimated ecosystems. "The forestry companies are not replanting and if they are, it's only one species." Depending on the area, forestry companies commonly replace degraded forestation with single-species trees. "Global warming, climate change, and increasing human population means that strong, diverse forests are needed more than ever," she explains.

Christi hears the logging trucks arrive early in the morning and exit with full loads by noon.

"We need to stop the devastation that is happening to the lands and waters, and invest heavily into alternative building methods, products, science, and technology that will make this country a global leader for land stewardship around the world."

In Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows, Ontario, Treaty 3), community members have been fighting for an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the logging of the Whiskey Jack boreal forest. Internal government emails obtained by a freedom of information request from the *Toronto Star* reveal that government scientists have acknowledged that logging releases mercury into rivers and lakes. Nonetheless, the province's environment ministry has denied Grassy Narrows the EIA. The clearcutting continues with a 10-year FMA.

In B.C., meanwhile, where the forestry



Sylvia has noticed shotgun holes piercing the "No Clearcutting" sign she put up.



A worker's hard hat left behind.



Sylvia watches the logging trucks haul out timber.

industry annually brings in \$12 billion, Indigenous people are leading the resistance to the clearcutting and flooding of Treaty 8 boreal forest in preparation for the Site C hydroelectric project, emboldened by a history of anti-logging actions like the Haida Nation's creation of the Duu Guusd Tribal Park in Haida Gwaii and the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation's establishment of a park on Meares Island, in both cases to protect the regions from logging.

LAND AND BODIES

This treatment of the land is directly linked to the colonization of Indigenous people, as clearcutting becomes an aggressive means to eliminate traditional lifestyle. Indigenous people are not separate entities from the land; they exist *because* of the land. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson has acknowledged the Indigenous nations

"who are so in love with their land, they are the land." Erica Violet Lee likewise makes this point when she writes: "And what of the theft of Indigenous languages and the destruction of waterways and forests? When we love on this land it is never separate from these things."

Burning down cabins, shooting at Sylvia's signs of resistance, and stealing her tent are all symptoms of a colonial construct fuelled by land-based profit. Christi foresees that forest degradation will have intergenerational effects, just as residential schools have. "We are headed for great suffering for the coming generations if we lack the foresight to do the right thing now for them," she says.

"I've come to realize that my life has no value to the process of colonization," Sylvia says. "As land protectors, our lives are primarily unprotected and not valued.

I feel like my life is easily disposable as a protector and as an Indigenous woman."

Although clearcutting shows no signs of slowing down, Sakâw Askiy will have to dig a lot deeper to separate Sylvia from her tireless and invaluable defence of the land of her traditional roots. "We are, after all, the titleholders of these lands. That needs to be respected and honoured," she says. ★



NICKITA LONGMAN is from the George Gordon First Nation on Treaty 4 but has spent most of her life in Regina. Nickita graduated from the First Nations University of Canada with a BA in English in 2013. She is the Indigenous program coordinator for the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, a freelance writer, and a Briarpatch board member.



TRADING ON MOBILITY

The Trans-Pacific Partnership expands the role of private businesses in determining workers' access to Canada and their mobility rights.

BY LYNETTE FISCHER

ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA PRIEBE

On a Wednesday evening in June 2016, the minister of international trade, Chrystia Freeland, appeared at the University of Toronto as part of the Liberal government's public consultations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which Canada and 11 partner countries had signed in February of that year. The largest and most geographically expansive trade agreement the country has ever signed on to has yet to be ratified.

Hundreds attended the two-hour-plus meeting to pose questions to Minister Freeland on issues of Indigenous rights, net neutrality, copyright terms, drug affordability, environmental policies, food sovereignty, investor disputes, and temporary labour. The overwhelming majority of those who asked questions were opposed to the TPP, wary of the decision-making power that it could put in the hands of private companies. One attendee remarked, "In these consultations, you're made to feel like a serf pleading to the king."

Their concerns, particularly around labour and migration, are not without precedent. Trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are conspicuous for their support of corporate discretion in relocating production facilities, which often leaves workers in the manufacturing sector looking for new employment, usually in jobs with lower wages and less security. There is a familiar pattern in which corporations threaten to close or move their facilities during negotiations with unions, or to shut down unionization efforts altogether. We can recognize a similar scheme when foreign companies win contracts to supply services in Canada, and then shuttle highly skilled but temporary workers across borders to carry out this work.

More indirectly, the effects of trade agreements on labour are visible when imported goods depress economies of the Majority world, pushing workers to seek temporary and precarious employment in wealthier countries. As a review of the TPP by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organization argues: "Migrant workers are often caught in this

vicious cycle, displaced from agricultural or other domestic industries by cheap, often subsidized imports, and recruited into exploitative working conditions in other countries."

But the category of "migrant workers" of course includes both low-skilled and highly skilled workers (business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, investors, and professionals and technicians). Through trade agreements, companies hire workers considered "highly skilled," like engineers and scientists coming from the U.S. and northern Europe, who are expedited through migration procedures. Those deemed "low-skilled," like farm workers coming from the Philippines and Mexico, must apply through non-trade agreement streams, where they are subjected to multiple approval processes to fill jobs that fit the three Ds: dirty, dangerous, and difficult.

While it remains to be seen what the TPP's long-term effects could be on migratory labour, there is cause for concern. The TPP will extend employers' already significant role in migration, including new discretion over entry qualifications, hiring caps, and wage rates. What's more, while the Temporary Foreign Worker Program has mechanisms to discipline employers for abuses, there are no such regulations in place to ensure that these employers will not simply hire through trade agreement streams, which have less governmental oversight.

International trade and corporate influence affect not only the transnational mobility of highly skilled, high-wage workers, but also create conditions that force people to seek out low-skill work. While alarming stories of labour migration have long revealed the high stakes for workers, far less understood is the role of private businesses in determining workers' access to Canada and their mobility rights.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Canada's migration policies segment workers based on skill levels, as determined through the National Occupational Classification (NOC) matrix, a sorting tool developed over 20

years ago, in part through consultation with business. The NOC matrix is used to justify the differential treatment of migrants, and it results in vastly different experiences of approval processes and access to stable and safe work.

This segmentation begins with Employment and Social Development Canada initiating a review called a Labour Market

an only-as-needed, economically necessary model. Migrant workers in this category are considered to be filling a labour shortage, which occurs when the demand for workers is higher than the pool of workers willing to do the labour at the wage and in the conditions offered. But as research by the Migration Policy Institute reveals, "Economists disagree as to whether

International trade and corporate influence affect not only the transnational mobility of highly skilled, high-wage workers, but also create conditions that force people to seek out low-skill work.

'labor shortages' exist at all: if particular skills are scarce, employers will raise wages and more workers will come forward or seek training to join the occupation." Employers won't raise

Impact Assessment (LMIA), which determines whether an international hire will fill a labour shortage that can't be filled by Canadian workers. The purpose of an LMIA is ostensibly to ensure that all qualified Canadians are considered for work before foreign workers are hired. In the absence of such an assessment, employers are able to bypass the qualified and available domestic labour pool. But the TPP prohibits LMIs from determining whether workers brought in through the agreement will fill labour shortages.

Where employers are exempt from this assessment, company representatives are often the only contact workers will have with the Canadian migration system before travelling to Canada; the paperwork and costs borne by the worker are minimal, streamlined through the "Employer Portal" – a tool developed specifically to log and expedite the issuance of job offers for LMIA-exempt positions.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, LMIs supposedly demonstrate "that there is a need for a foreign worker to fill the job" and "that no Canadian worker is available to do the job." In practice, however, LMIs are used to determine which positions can be filled by racialized workers coming from the Global South/Majority world, where assessment fees are routinely passed from the employer to the worker.

The segmentation of migrants continues where "low-skilled" workers receive "tied" work permits that lock them to a single employer, while those whose work is LMIA-exempt, like those coming through trade agreements, are granted "open" work permits that leave the employer unspecified. This differentiation of migrants persists when it comes to family reunification and access to permanent status, both of which are only available to migrants holding open permits.

The mobility of those coming through trade agreements privileges those termed by anthropologist Aihwa Ong as "ideal" migrants, whose bounty of skills is held up as a benchmark and used to justify an employer's poor treatment of "low-skilled" migrant workers, as well as the federal government's failure to ensure the latter any sort of permanent status.

LMIs and tied work permits frame migrants through

wages or improve conditions when they can import labour.

"Our opposition to the TPP must be about simultaneously how its provisions will force more people in the South to leave their homes for decent work and how current federal and provincial laws deny permanent status and protections," says Syed Hussan, from the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change.

PARALLEL SYSTEMS

With the introduction of the NOC matrix in the 1990s, there was a definitive shift away from admission based on personal suitability and toward labour market qualifications that prioritized quantifiable skills, like formal education, professional training, and occupational experience. This new emphasis gave increasing responsibility to the business sector to help define the scale of skills. This is the framework upon which the current migration system is built.

In her study of Guatemalan migrants working in Canada, geographer Giselle Valarezo explains the nature of this corporate influence: "Businesses lobby for efficient amendments that intensively privatize selection and admission procedures, sanctioning the ability of employers to act as agents of the public interest and allowing them to oversee and monitor the documented migration of foreign workers."

The TPP is positioned to intensify this existing authority, giving companies expanded rights to hire high-skilled workers, and to decide how much beyond minimum wage some entry streams should be paid.

As Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, a researcher with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, cautions, "The TPP does not give new rights to workers to move across borders. Instead, it gives new rights to employers to hire internationally or to move workers across borders." And what this amounts to is a kind of "parallel immigration system" carried out in the interest of private business.

Anarchist anthropologist David Graeber argues that free trade is about "the creation of global administrative structures mainly aimed at ensuring the extraction of profits for investors." This objective is perhaps most glaring in the

TPP's investor-state dispute settlement measures.

The deal's provisions on temporary labour allow states to sue one another in private arbitration. This requires a state, acting on behalf of temporary workers (or, more likely, their hiring company), to demonstrate a "pattern of practice" showing that the other state used governmental regulation to interfere with the trade agreement.

Alarming, this is actually stricter than dispute settlements throughout the rest of the TPP where, borrowing from NAFTA, a private company can sue the Canadian government directly. Originally included in NAFTA as a bulwark against corruption in Mexico's legal system, it has resulted in making Canada the most sued country under NAFTA, and is a blatant example of how trade agreements privilege corporations ahead of public interests and workers' rights.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

On the campaign trail in 2015, Justin Trudeau assured prospective voters, "the Liberal party fully respects labour unions and the work they do and is intending to work with them." This stance, however, rests at odds with the party's past and present support for trade agreements, which have been shown time and again to weaken labour rights and union participation.

Trudeau's election campaign criticized the incumbent Conservative government's secrecy around the TPP and promised to bring the public into the fold. But Trudeau hasn't fulfilled his promise of transparent public consultation. In practice, says Sujata Dey, Council of Canadians trade campaigner, outreach has amounted to an email address on the Global Affairs Canada website and Freeland's tour of the country, hosting mainly invite-only meetings with groups comprised of, as Dey notes, "the usual blue-chip industry reps, chamber of commerce boards, and lawyers and academics – not you or me."

Minister Freeland signed the TPP in February 2016, and the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade has extended the deadline for public submissions about the TPP to January 27, 2017. How they proceed from this public input has yet to be seen, though during a highly publicized appearance in late October at the National Young Workers' Summit – where, in protest, a number of attendees stood with their backs to Trudeau – the Prime Minister strongly indicated that his government plans to ratify the deal by the February 2018 deadline.

For the deal to go through, ratification is required from countries making up at least 85 per cent of the 12 partners' combined gross domestic product. If the United States withdraws, as incoming president Donald Trump has promised to do upon taking office, the TPP, at least in its current iteration, will collapse.

With no guarantees, however, activists and organizations (including the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Labour Congress) continue their work to galvanize people around resistance campaigns.

Alongside anti-TPP activism, migrants' rights advocates like the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change urge that dissent against the agreement and its provisions on migratory labour must be coupled with a larger conversation about how the current system already empowers employers over workers, and the deleterious effects this has both in Canada and abroad.

In an effort to challenge unfair migration policies, the Coalition for Migrant Worker Rights Canada – a partnership between nine migrants' rights activist groups from across the country – launched the MoVE (Mobility, Voice and Equality) campaign to inform government about the need to end tied work permits, change labour impact assessments, and for low-waged migrant workers to gain access to permanent status upon arrival.

With the trade agreement on the brink of ratification, migrant workers are facing increasingly muscular business privileges and ever more anemic labour rights. Ultimately, activism against the TPP and advocacy for fairer migration practices both call for the same thing: policies that work to benefit people, not simply to accumulate corporate profit. ★




LYNETTE FISCHER is a PhD candidate in social anthropology at York University, as well as a member of the Global Labour Research Centre. Her interests intersect at labour and its rights, and citizenship and its exclusions.

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SCHOOL DISPATCH

Police officers are stationed in high schools across Toronto under the guise of ensuring school safety. With powers to search and arrest students, they criminalize student conduct and build mistrust and alienation among marginalized students.



BY PHILLIP DWIGHT MORGAN

ILLUSTRATION BY RAZ LATIF

On May 23, 2007, just days after his 15th birthday, Jordan Manners was shot and killed in his high school in northwest Toronto. As the first-ever killing of a student in a school in the history of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Manners' death sparked concerns about the safety of Toronto's schools and the risk of gun violence.

At the time of Manners' shooting, the Ontario government was seven years into implementing the Safe Schools Act, which took a "zero-tolerance" approach to disciplining "bad behaviour" in schools. The legislation gave teachers and principals significant power to suspend and expel students. In that time, the rate of police involvement in schools increased, as did suspensions and incidents of teachers' discrimination against Black students and those with disabilities. Data collected by the Ministry of Education showed that in 2000–2001, prior to the implementation of the Safe Schools Act, 113,778 students in Ontario had been suspended; by 2003–2004, that number had jumped to 152,626 – a total of 7.2 per cent of all Ontario students. The spike in discipline was so sharp that in July 2005, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) initiated a complaint against the TDSB, alleging that the measures had a disproportional impact on racialized

students and students with disabilities. The OHRC reached a settlement with the board in November 2005: the TDSB agreed to collect and analyze data on suspensions and expulsions to determine the extent of the negative effects of the Safe Schools legislation on students.

When Manners was shot, with the Safe Schools Act in full effect, the TDSB hired lawyer Julian Falconer to lead the School Community Safety Advisory Panel on assessing "school safety."

The Falconer panel attributed violence and animosity in schools to inadequate social supports in schools and the widespread distrust of school administration, arguing, "schools

enforcement, but instead positioned them as components of a larger strategy focused on highly centralized school governance. It advised that community consultation, education, training for students and teachers, and annual reviews of policies were required. The desired outcome was not good schools but more orderly schools.

The community organization Education Action: Toronto (EA:TO) thoroughly critiqued the Falconer report, situating the panel's recommendations in the rise of outcomes-based education (standardized testing, official profiling, ministry micromanaging) in Ontario: "these government policies are policies

THE PANEL DID NOT ENTIRELY ESCHEW DISCIPLINE AND ENFORCEMENT, BUT INSTEAD POSITIONED THEM AS COMPONENTS OF A LARGER STRATEGY OF HIGHLY CENTRALIZED SCHOOL GOVERNANCE.

inevitably mirror the communities that they serve." It called for increased financial support for school programming and dismantling the one-size-fits-all approach to discipline that the Safe Schools Act had implemented. The panel did not entirely eschew discipline and

on which Falconer remains silent, and yet they are education's most destructive factors in alienating students and teachers in poor neighbourhoods." EA:TO describes the recommendations as a shift from "a Tory to a Liberal 'culture' of control" – a critique epitomized by the panel's call

to replace German shepherds in school searches with lightweight, "non-threatening" springer spaniels. The Falconer report merely softened the blow in this milieu of sustained securitization.

The TDSB ignored the most fundamental of Falconer's recommendations – to avoid wholesale reliance on discipline and enforcement – and instead pursued a cheaper option proposed by then-Toronto police chief Bill Blair (now parliamentary secretary to the minister of justice): implementing a student resource officer (SRO) program. According to Public Service Canada, in 2008, aided by a one-year provincial grant of \$2.1 million, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) deployed 30 police officers for 30 schools overseen by the public and Catholic school boards; the boards,

school liaison officers (elementary schools), and 11 "School Watch"/high school liaison officers. The deployment of SROs has only broadened the scope of the surveillance of marginalized youth.

Researcher Gita Madan observes that the conspicuous presence of police in schools results in "a culture of control that constantly codes the bodies of racialized students in particular ways, teaching students about themselves and their place within the hierarchy of the school. It also sends a clear message to the broader school community about the students who attend the school."

"For example," she says, "at one school located on a major street, the SRO often insists on parking his police car directly in front of the school instead of in his assigned spot in the parking lot behind the building.

of policing and in part from the British policing model established under Robert Peel, the central idea followed Peel's own dictum: "The police are the public, and the public are the police." Community policing integrated police into communities, relying on community-based surveillance to inform police.

Requiring communities to become responsible for crime and threat prevention permeated not only residential and commercial communities, but also schools. The swell of police violence in the 1960s targeting Black activists in the civil rights movement jump-started the practice of deploying police to schools, ostensibly to improve perceptions of law enforcement. Richard Nixon's law-and-order campaign, Ronald Reagan's war on drugs, and Bill Clinton's war on poverty, in the meantime, vilified young people of colour as the criminals of tomorrow, all the while thinning out the welfare state's ability to support the working class and adequately fund schools. Following the high-profile school shootings in the U.S. in the 1990s, many American schools adopted programs that rested on the assumption that conspicuous security mechanisms like metal detectors, cameras, and uniformed officers deter violence in schools. On this side of the border, write Abigail Tsionne Salole and Zakaria Abdulle, "some Toronto-area schools are looking increasingly similar to their American counterparts."

Public Safety Canada explains, "The objectives of the School Resource Officer program are to improve safety (real and perceived) in and around public schools, improve the perception of the police amongst youth in the community and improve the relationship between students and police." Police services across Canada frame SROs as performing some variation of developing positive attitudes, providing services, and liaising between parents, students, and teachers. In Calgary, for instance, SROs are explicitly marketed as bringing a "visible and positive image of law enforcement."

But SROs do more than cheerful

TORONTO'S FIRST PERMANENT SROs WERE STATIONED PRIMARILY IN "PRIORITY AREAS": NEIGHBOURHOODS CATEGORIZED AS HAVING HIGH "SOCIAL RISK" IN PART BECAUSE OF THEIR LARGE NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANT, RACIALIZED, AND LONE-PARENT POPULATIONS.

not the police service, determined which schools would be assigned an SRO. The program signalled a massive escalation in the school securitization process that had begun more than a decade earlier.

Toronto's first permanent SROs were stationed primarily in "priority areas": neighbourhoods that the City of Toronto categorized as having high "social risk" in part because of their large numbers of immigrant, racialized, and lone-parent populations. According to the TPS, SROs "work in partnership with students, teachers, school administrators, school board officials, parents, other police officers, and the community to establish and maintain a healthy and safe school community." TPS records indicate that during the 2015–16 school year, there were 38 SROs (high schools), 19 community

This move has resulted in passersby frequently asking what just happened at the school." Inside schools, surveillance cameras and hall monitors enforcing strict codes of conduct remind students that they are always being watched.

The presence of SROs has created an environment of police saturation, in which sirens, cruisers, and uniformed bodies conspire to insinuate an absolute need for securitization.

COMMUNITY POLICING

The practice of deploying police officers to schools cannot be separated from the practice of community policing. Mandated by the RCMP in 1989, community policing was designed to build trust between police and communities. Imported partly from the U.S. system

relationship-building: they have the authority to search, arrest, and charge students, and collect intelligence. In a study of the school-to-prison pipeline for marginalized youth in Canada, Salole and

social media. But these "success stories" are uncomfortably situated against the backdrop of 20 years of under-resourcing in Ontario's education system, a problem felt most acutely by the TDSB, the largest

SROs DO MORE THAN CHEERFUL RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING: THEY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SEARCH, ARREST, AND CHARGE STUDENTS, AND COLLECT INTELLIGENCE.

Abdulle recall an incident where students were unable to leave their classroom after a cellphone was reported missing to an SRO. In what amounted to a lockdown lasting over an hour, the SRO fruitlessly searched through students' belongings. After the students were released, it was discovered that the student who reported the missing cellphone had in fact forgotten it at home.

Since 2011, critical media coverage of the program has disappeared almost entirely, normalizing the increased securitization and regular police presence in schools. Only two evaluations of the program – one in 2009 and the other in 2011 – have taken place in the eight years that police have been stationed in schools. Both evaluations were conducted internally by the TPS, and unsurprisingly, they found that the program and its officers had an overwhelmingly positive impact. As Madan notes, the evaluations were rife with methodological flaws, prioritizing officers' experiences and perceptions of the program's effectiveness over the students', predictably highlighting the positive impacts of the program.

It's difficult to find current information about Toronto's SRO program. (I had to leave my contact details to get information when online sources and attempts to contact the school board failed.) Most current information on SROs has been produced and vetted by the TPS corporate communications team, offering "success stories" from police via newsletters, television interviews, and

board in the province. While overall education spending has increased since the Mike Harris years (1995–2002), the provincial government continues to draw on the Harris government's flawed funding formula, which excludes support for physical education, field trips, art classes, and libraries. As a result, the TDSB has been locked in a system of recurring budgetary shortfalls: in 2012, the shortfall was \$109 million, increased by \$50 million the following year, and rose to \$189 million by 2014. To remedy this problem, the TDSB searches for areas where it can find "savings," cutting the number of elementary and secondary teachers, lunchroom supervisors, and

'pushed out' of school and subsequently incarcerated." What is clear, however, is that amid security cameras, random searches, and armed officers, the experience of surveillance, profiling, and brutality that many marginalized youth face outside of school is replicated in schools. The classroom is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from the prison as students made "known to police" on the street through carding may later encounter police in their school.

Several qualitative studies have shown that SROs effectively prime students for the prison system by cultivating fear, mistrust, and alienation – barriers to the pursuit of education and employment. In 2009, a *Toronto Star* investigation found that schools with the highest suspension rates were also typically in areas with high incarceration costs. The investigation, which combined suspension rates with postal code data for inmates, also noted that school principals frequently circumvented suspension guidelines by imposing unattainable conditions for students to access alternative programming. One Toronto student's 19-day suspension for smoking marijuana lasted in effect almost five months and required a lawyer's intervention before he was able to

STUDENTS WHO TRANSGRESS BY FIGHTING AND WEARING HOODIES ARE REMINDED THAT POLICE SERVE TO ENFORCE DOMINANT CLASS RULE.

most recently, 50 special education jobs. These cuts work with the increased securitization of schools to create a school environment that is hostile to marginalized youth and unable to adequately respond to their needs.

While research demonstrates that racialized, low-income, and disabled youth face harsher discipline in schools and higher rates of dropping out and incarceration, researchers like Salole and Abdulle note that, "due to data constraints, it's impossible to determine whether it is the same youth who are

return to school. Discrimination against marginalized students pushes them away from schools and out onto streets that are equally, if not more, hostile to their needs.

SUDDEN ESCALATIONS

Madan explains that one way the SROs "build relationships" with students is by inserting themselves into the students' recreation. "I asked one of my former students how he felt about his junior boys' baseball team being scheduled to play several games against a team of police officers. He said, 'I'd rather just play

against another school. I don't wanna shake their hands because they're the ones who are constantly looking at me every time I'm walking down the street."

In an interview with researcher Melanie Willson, a teacher named Adam captured the escalation of response: "There was a fight that broke out in a classroom. And the principal's office was called and the VP came up and he brought up not only the [SRO], but two of his friends who happened to be visiting him. So the kids [were] ushered down to

TPS budget bestows vast time and economic resources to SROs, advancing their status as an indispensable part of the education system. The words *school* and *resource* tacked onto the word *officer* have depoliticized police labour, ignoring the ways that it mobilizes hierarchies of class, race, gender, and ability in the service of oppression.

In 2009, just two years after the death of Jordan Manners, a video of an altercation between a student at Northern Secondary School in Toronto and an

trustee, concluded that the incident only reinforced the need for police in schools: "As sad as this incident was, I think this absolutely supports the reason why we need the program. ... There's obviously a gap between students and police and I think both sides have some stereotypes about the other."

SROs are well-resourced police officers. Perhaps by accurately naming their positions, we can begin to cut through their authority. A police-centred perspective that takes the police at their word will always obscure the experiences of racialized and low-income communities, which should rather be amplified. If schools are to be safe for all students, they must adopt a hard-line, zero-tolerance policy against the police, not marginalized youth. Replacing SROs with support workers, who can assist students without increasing their likelihood of interacting with the prison system, must be the top priority. ★

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the office, accompanied by three police officers. And I said to the VP, 'Do we really need to bring these people for a fight?' And he's like, 'They're here in the school. They're here. I use them.'"

In another instance, a TDSB teacher named Darrel recalled that, when an SRO demanded that a student take his hood down, the student responded by saying, "You're not staff here ... who are you to tell me to take my hood off?" The SRO took the student to the ground for being aggressive, a response so disproportionate that it's reminiscent of police officer Ben Shields violently taking down a 16-year-old Black girl in a classroom in the U.S. This everyday discipline not only obscures the relationship students have with police and administration, but also intimidates poor, racialized students with both the threat and the realization of everyday violence. Students who transgress by fighting and wearing hoodies are reminded that police serve to enforce dominant class rule.

TAKEN AT THEIR WORD

In an era where cuts to education have become commonplace, the well-padded

SRO, Constable Syed Ali Moosvi, went viral. According to reports, the altercation began after a 16-year-old student called Moosvi "bacon" as he walked through the hall. Moosvi pushed the student against the wall, ordering him to put his hands behind his back. The student repeatedly said that he'd done nothing wrong and did not deserve to be arrested. But Moosvi continued pushing the student against the wall before yelling, "What don't you understand? Put your hands behind your back!"

"What have I done? Don't you have to let me know what I've done first?" the student asked as he was dragged through the large crowd that had formed. People in the crowd yelled profanities at Moosvi, exclaiming, "We've got you on camera!"

TPS spokesperson Constable Wendy Drummond said of the incident, "One of the reasons for the officer to be there is to create a safe atmosphere." In the end, Moosvi, already once acquitted for assaulting a hearing-impaired Black man, escaped charges. The student, by contrast, was charged with assault with intent to resist arrest and was suspended from his high school. Josh Matlow, a school board



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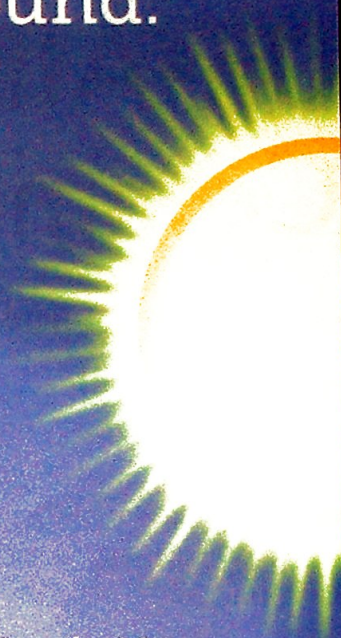
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Holding Out for Un-Alienated Communication

How should independent technologists and communicators respond to the corporatization of social media?

By THE INDYMEDIA MONTREAL 2016 CONVERGENCE WORKING GROUP

ILLUSTRATION BY GURLEEN RAI

In August 1996, we called for the creation of a network of independent media, a network of information. We mean a network to resist the power of the lie that sells us this war that we call the Fourth World War. We need this network not only as a tool for our social movements, but for our lives: this is a project of life, of humanity, humanity which has a right to critical and truthful information."

These were the words of Subcomandante Marcos, speaking in 1997 from Chiapas in the midst of the Zapatistas' guerrilla information war against the Mexican state and the neocolonialism reflected in NAFTA. Marcos's powerful statement and Zapatista stories of struggle were circulated from the jungle of Chiapas on mailing lists, listservs, and websites, capturing the imagination of activists around the world and galvanizing a wave of new grassroots media projects. Perhaps no project more purely embodied this response than the Indymedia network, which was launched in November 1999 at the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings and quickly grew into a global network of news websites.

As we've moved through the years, electronic organizing has shifted from bulletin boards and email lists to more public and accessible websites, and more recently to networked 'social media.' This shift has also been one of a migration to more corporate- and capitalist-controlled platforms – a control that leads to pervasive state and corporate surveillance, and which positions us as free labourers for the advertising industry. Organizers have to go to extreme ends to avoid this surveillance panopticon: every email, Facebook post, and tweet bolsters the ability of advertisers to execute targeted marketing campaigns;

if this weren't bad enough, they are also stored in government databases ready to be used to shut down dissent.

With the ever-present distortion of this surveillance-industrial complex, can social movements use corporate social media to truly challenge global capitalism?

We think that to take seriously Marcos's qualifying statement that our use of the Internet must be in the service of "resist[ing] the power of the lie that sells us this war that we call the Fourth World War," it will require that we once again build our own tools and radical networks outside the corporate-state system. In the summer of 2016, a group of media and tech organizers from several continents gathered at the World Forum of Free Media in Montreal to wrestle with this question. Many of the attendees have been involved with the Indymedia network, both its early days and its less visible continuations, such as the Indymedia Africa Working Group. We circulated a call in advance of the meeting asking: "What could a global independent media/tech network be in the era of corporate social media?" Out of the responses to that call, we organized a stream of workshops and strategy sessions focused on reviewing and assessing the Indymedia network's potential and limits, and on discerning what is needed to build safe and anti-corporate media infrastructure, practices, and networked connections that can effectively support social struggle.

Those conversations are summarized here, and we invite you to participate in the next steps.

ROOTS AND REASONS

To understand the relevance of Indymedia to these political questions, some history is necessary.



Indymedia is a network of independent media collectives, including journalists, organizers, activists, and tech workers. It sprang to life in late November, 1999, during the WTO meetings in Seattle. As a broad base of environmental, labour, and international solidarity groups came together to organize protests against the WTO, movement media-makers realized we could not rely on the capitalist press to report the substance of these groups' concerns; the media at the time were extremely critical of protestors and tended to focus on a stereotyped spectacle of violent activists clashing with police at the expense of reporting on social justice issues. To counter this distortion, we created our own media platform that allowed people to deliver their own messages.

Indymedia's official moniker is the Independent Media Center, or IMC, which is rooted in the physical convergence that took place in this first gathering. The centre set up during

the WTO protests provided experienced and novice media-makers alike with the tools to tell their stories accurately and rapidly in the face of corporate media misinformation and police repression. Before these distorted narratives hit the mainstream press, on-the-ground reports from the IMC showing the view

from the street were already online.

The energy unlocked by this experience was palpable; suddenly organizers were not only

We were freed from the alienation of viewing our efforts through corporate media's distorted and silencing coverage.

choreographing displays of resistance, but also seeing them in an accessible media forum. We were freed from the alienation of viewing our efforts through corporate media's distorted and silencing coverage. Those master-narrative stories still appeared, but their illegitimacy was made apparent by the real news stories featuring the concerns that propelled people into the streets. Corporate media had to backtrack on their parroting of police claims to not be using rubber bullets when IMC reports

provided proof that they were. The IMC became ground zero for the counter-narrative of the Battle of Seattle.

The roots of this success ran deep. Decades of movement media work had preceded Indymedia: participants came with experience from the anti-war underground press, labour news outlets, the feminist movement and women-run presses, the pirate radio movement, and many other milieus of cultural contestation.

But the level of collaboration that came to fruition in Seattle was largely possible because of a unique confluence of traditional "old" media-makers and a bevy of young technology workers with key skills and resources that the global economy was gearing up to harvest for profit. These technologist-organizers worked collaboratively to coordinate access to the most cutting-edge technology. The IMC in Seattle and other early Indymedia convergence centres offered regular people, living their lives outside of academia and the technology elite, a chance to experience high-speed Internet, digital photography, website development, and the coordinated use of cellular technology to maintain communication.

Even more significantly, some of these technologists put their labour power toward developing a web interface that would enable regular people to immediately post stories. This concept is ubiquitous now, but at the time, websites were mostly managed by a single "webmaster" who coded the sites manually. Indymedia programmers built one of the first fully featured and interactive interfaces, one that enabled a public with minimal technical skills to contribute content that was automatically incorporated into a local Indymedia website. We called it open publishing, and it became a hallmark of Indymedia. Originally based on a codebase called "Active," open publishing was first developed in Sydney, Australia by the radical tech collective Catalyst. Active was developed for the worldwide June 1999 Carnival Against Capitalism protests, whose slogan was "Our resistance is as transnational as capital." New versions of the code were developed in the run-up to Seattle and eventually morphed into other codebases and concepts that we now consider the building blocks of the modern web: content management systems, blogs, and user-generated content.

A NETWORK AND A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Within a year, IMCs were forming on six continents, often in conjunction with protests. By 2000, both Indymedia and the Global Justice Movement were at their heights. Whenever the forces of transnational capital held a summit, the Global Justice Movement was present and Indymedia reported on it. With such momentum, requests for new IMCs were coming in faster

than tech workers could set them up.

It quickly became clear that organizations outside of an autonomous-left, grassroots perspective also wanted to make their own media – including right-wing organizations, political parties, and NGOs. Many of the original IMCistas, who identified as anarchists or other radicals, became concerned that the network would grow without clear opposition to the forces of neocolonialism and status-quo accommodation. We knew we needed to define our politics – and soon.

In April of 2001, around 150 Indymedia organizers from all over the world met in San Francisco to finalize our principles of unity and criteria for membership – documents that laid the groundwork for the politics of the network and the process

for joining. They called for: open publishing; a not-for-profit, decentralized network of autonomous collectives; participatory decision-making processes at the local level; non-hierarchical and

anti-authoritarian relationships; using free and open-source software wherever possible; and non-discrimination based on race, gender, age, or sexual orientation.

The solidification of the network structure and principles formalized Indymedia's role as a social movement for revolutionary change. We weren't objective in the corporate journalism sense; rather, we were transparently and definitively non-neutral. We were a social movement, not just "social media." Our goal was to make informed solidarity the binding force against a common foe: an economic-war system with insatiable appetites on a finite planet. The mission statement on the global page crystallized it: we were interested in "radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth ... despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity." In the words of John Ross, we were rebel reporters.

THE RISE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA

For-profit media-makers wasted no time in co-opting open publishing technology. Shortly after its deployment by activists, the code for the site was picked up and incorporated into mainstream press experiments, with adjustments made to give owners editorial control. The basic concept of user participation in content creation quickly became the new standard of website development, and companies and resourced NGOs began paying tech workers to hone these tools. The process of privatizing and repurposing social movement software and ideas was underway. Under the cynical language of freedom of expression, movement software and its ideas were being repackaged for profit and surveillance, eventually settling under the auspices of "social media."

Through the wild popularity of social media interfaces like Facebook, YouTube, and Google, user data has become the primary tool for transferring money from the poor and middle classes to the elite. The industry term for this process is *data-mining*: users gain access to free services in exchange for giving companies the right to watch their behaviour and use it in market research that will then inform advertising strategies. This coordinated state/capitalist mechanism for siphoning the people's knowledge turns users of social media into unpaid labourers for corporations. Ironically, this trend has occurred at the same time that activists have become highly adept at using these social media interfaces to deliver messages of dissent and liberation to a mass audience. Many organizers now actively direct their constituents to these platforms. Far from being just a matter of "mainstream taste," it is propelling the motor of global capitalism from the coltan mines of Congo to the sweatshops of China and beyond.

The political-economic motives embedded in the development of these user-driven forums have been obscured for many in the Global North/Minority world by the experience of liberatory connection that accompanied the Internet's early deployment. But the ruling class funders know what they are doing. In 2008, the *Guardian* reported that Greylock Venture Capital, whose senior partner sits on the board of the CIA's venture capital wing, In-Q-Tel, invested US\$27.5 million in Facebook. Now all Facebook posts, texts, and email are stored in National Security Agency databases, and cellphones serve as tracking and surveillance devices that users willingly pay for. In the Global South/Majority world, where deployment of the technology is still underway, the profit motives are currently front and centre: one investor recently referred to the user data captured through social media as "the new oil."

Repression with the aid of corporate-state surveillance has become evident to a wider audience recently with revelations of how Black Lives Matter organizers and water defenders at Standing Rock have been targeted thanks to data sold to law enforcement by companies like Geofeedia.

Recently, Facebook and the state of Israel entered into an agreement to "work together" to monitor Palestinian posts. So far, dozens of Palestinian journalists have been arrested and detained in Israel for alleged incitement charges stemming from posts on their Facebook pages. Hundreds of other Palestinian activists and bloggers have been targeted for arrest and prosecution. The *Intercept* recently reported that Facebook accepts 95 per cent of Israel's requests for censorship.

Within the Indymedia network, principled tech workers have from the get-go pushed for and applied tactics designed to resist corporate-state co-optation within the structure of our technical platforms. They argued that all IMCs should prioritize using free and open-source software instead of for-profit tools, and succeeded in incorporating this standard into the network's principles of unity. They also made it impossible for Indymedia websites to be used to collect or store data from users – thus making it unavailable for seizure by state or corporate interests – and have even defended this practice against legal threats. These were not easy standards to assert and defend, because companies were constantly deploying new technology in increasingly user-friendly formats, all based around the opposite logic.

Many "non-techies," both within Indymedia and the broader movement, didn't understand the political and economic logic of these alternative practices. To the uninitiated, they seemed rooted in an arcane manner of thinking that reified correct technology as a "goal." Many dismissed the thinking as coming from a perspective of privilege. But as the industry's logic has revealed itself, a growing number of us have realized the larger goal within which these principles were asserted.

HOLDING OUT FOR UN-ALIENATED COMMUNICATION

Organizers who had initially embraced corporate social media, and those who critiqued it, are now faced with a challenge. How do we establish a principled approach to social media without squelching the power that movements have recently gained

through appropriating these tools? What sort of network or structure is needed to support such a project? As we dug into these challenges in Montreal, we found they raised a lot of related questions.

In the late 1990s, we approached a parallel challenge with a strategy that said, "Don't hate the media; be the media." In so doing, we redefined the very nature of media from being a tool of mindless repetition of the master narrative to a space between, and beyond, the narrow confines of the capitalist press. Today, as the intent and scope of the surveillance-industrial complex become increasingly apparent, we see that our challenge is not to hate the social but to "be the social."

Another way to put this is that dominant social media has obfuscated what it means to be social. An emancipatory definition of this term would counter all forces that harm our social fabric. Social should refer to how we work with each other to

Repression with the aid of corporate-state surveillance has become evident with revelations of how Black Lives Matter organizers and water defenders at Standing Rock have been targeted thanks to data sold by companies like Geofeedia to law enforcement.

bolster social struggle, not to further consumerism, alienation, and capitalist accumulation. Our task, then, is to rediscover the power of solidarity, mutual aid, and an ability to communicate in a way that empowers not only us as individuals, but also as members of a worldwide community engaged in social struggle.

Our meetings in Montreal were an effort to kindle this spirit, and to revive the will to form a global network of tactical and networked media to undermine neoliberalism. As these conversations unfolded, so did a flurry of ideas about how we can step up our game to honour the demands of the situation we are now facing. Here are some of the main points that emerged:

- How can we promote dialogue within the movement around the political economy of media and technology, and especially about the role of corporate-state agendas in shaping the "social media" sphere? We discussed framing the work of replacing corporate tools with movement tools as a method of decolonizing our media.
- How can we better address the ways privilege and oppression have played out in Indymedia, and especially how the disempowerment of women and people of colour has divided tech workers from much of the movement.
- Which comes first: technology or movements? Technological innovations are most successful when they are developed co-operatively and in conversation with communities of resistance. Specific conversation began around a corporate-free live streaming app.
- We want to celebrate and build on Indymedia's organizational documents (mission statement, principles of unity, and admissions process) to ensure that our anti-oppression, anti-capitalist, and anti-hierarchical commitments are directly stated, and that the operational implications to these commitments are delineated.
- We discussed developing a process for supporting media and tech workers in impacted communities who are targeted with violent retaliation by governments and capitalist interests.
- We would like to facilitate more face-to-face meetings – and not only in conjunction with major mobilizations – in order to sustain these commitments; brainstorming took place around the possibility of a 2017 convergence in Mexico.

To move toward these visions, we formed a number of working groups, and we invite your participation in them. Some of these working groups overlap with teams already active in the Indymedia network, and in other movement contexts. Through the World Forum of Free Media's assembly process, we tried to identify overlaps and common goals, and we would welcome uniting with other groups who were not present at WFFM.

This work is currently being coordinated through the following means:

- a newly created website that contains documentation of

the Indymedia Montreal Convergence: la.indymedia.org/converge

- two email listservs that facilitate announcement-level updates: la.indymedia.org/mailman/listinfo/indy-share and/or active participation: la.indymedia.org/mailman/listinfo/indy-converge
- regular online meetings are being held on Internet Relay Chat (IRC)
- general inquiries can be directed to indy-converge@la.indymedia.org

We came away from the Montreal meetings with a renewed commitment to build on the successes of Indymedia by increasing the clarity, commitment, and coordination of all of our efforts. We do not know what Indymedia will look like going forward ... what we do know is that it will take a collective effort to imagine and build it. We hope you will join in! ★

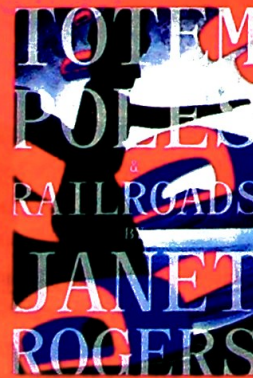


The INDYMEDIA MONTREAL 2016 CONVERGENCE WORKING GROUP is an international caucus of media organizers who convened around the August meetings of the World Social Forum and the World Forum of Free Media in Montreal. The working group also initiated an action protesting the mass denial of Global South visas for forum participants by the Canadian government. Contact: indy-converge@la.indymedia.org

my hands are solar panels to praise and release I am reaching deep inside healing feeling the burn

These poems are new and fresh but also the continuation of a very long conversation, and Rogers has that gifted sort of voice and brilliant perspective that weave together rhyme and reason. She sings, she challenges, she rips open the world and shows us something better. Her rhythm is resolute. Her words are smoke that rises above the fray.

— Katherena Vermette, Governor General's Award-winning author of *North End Love Songs* and Governor General's Award finalist for *The Break*.



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QUOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND



"We often believe with criminal superficiality that to educate the masses politically is to deliver a long political harangue from time to time. We think that it is enough that the leader or one of his lieutenants should speak in a pompous tone about the principal events of the day for them to have fulfilled this bounden duty to educate the masses politically. Now, political education means opening their minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence ... it is 'to invent souls'. To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people."

—FRANTZ FANON

"If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal."

—EMMA GOLDMAN

"The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom, and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question 'What would Sitting Bull do?' —the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: 'Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children.'"

—WINONA LADUKE
LA Progressive

"My world, my Earth is a ruin. A planet spoiled by the human species. We multiplied and fought and gobbled until there was nothing left, and then we died. We controlled neither appetite nor violence; we did not adapt. We destroyed ourselves. But we destroyed the world first."

—URSULA K. LE GUIN
The Dispossessed

"Today's hospitals and clinics, we well know, grew in alliance with the expanding capitalist state, steeped in a rabidly oppositional rationalism that sought to free Europe from the shackles of the medieval church. The way we work within healthcare is shaped by the patterns of dominance and exploitation that history has imprinted onto us. Despite its ethos of care and inclusion, healthcare is riddled with contradictions inherent to our society's deep neuroses about class, gender and race, about ownership and control, about profit and policing, about knowledge and work."

—BAIJAYANTA MUKHOPADHYAY
A Labour of Liberation

"In the Anthropocene, I'm annoyed with the developing of this louder

voice from these 'eco-modernists'. They advocate for what they call the 'good Anthropocene,' where humans are entirely in control by using more capitalism, more technology, more of the very kinds of practices that caused the problems in the first place. Instead of being critical or imagining that their solutions have problems too, they just say 'no, just put us in charge and we'll take over and fix everything'. I think if the Anthropocene discussion is going to be worth anything those people can't get the upper hand in defining what the conversation is about."

—ANNA TSING

'Auto-Rewilding' Landscapes and the Anthropocene: Interview with Anna Tsing in Allegra Lab.

"I couldn't expect to simply anoint myself a 'good guy' and miraculously be 100 percent pure from then on. What was required instead — the essential challenge of being a revolutionary — was an honest, ongoing process that involved both serious introspection and constructive collective discussions. It's not like we're adrift on a featureless, turbulent sea. We're deeply rooted in the solid ground of the needs and aspirations of the oppressed."

—DAVID GILBERT
Love and Struggle

"A good rebel reporter doesn't just take notes on rebellion. A good rebel reporter incites rebellion, makes people angry, encourages organization, offers them hope that another world is possible. A rebel reporter is a participant in rebellion or resistance or revolution or whatever you want to call the struggle for social change. Like the Zapatistas, our words are our weapons."

—JOHN ROSS
Rebel Reporting: John Ross Speaks to Independent Journalists

"The most that a working-class party could do, even if its politicians remained honest, would be to form a strong faction in the legislatures which might, by combining its vote with one side or another, win certain political or economic palliatives."

But what the working-class can do, when once they grow into a solidified organization, is to show the possessing class, through a sudden cessation of all work, that the whole social structure rests on them; that the possessions of the others are absolutely worthless to them without the workers' activity; that such protests, such strikes, are inherent in the system of property and will continually recur until the whole thing is abolished — and having shown that effectively, proceed to expropriate."

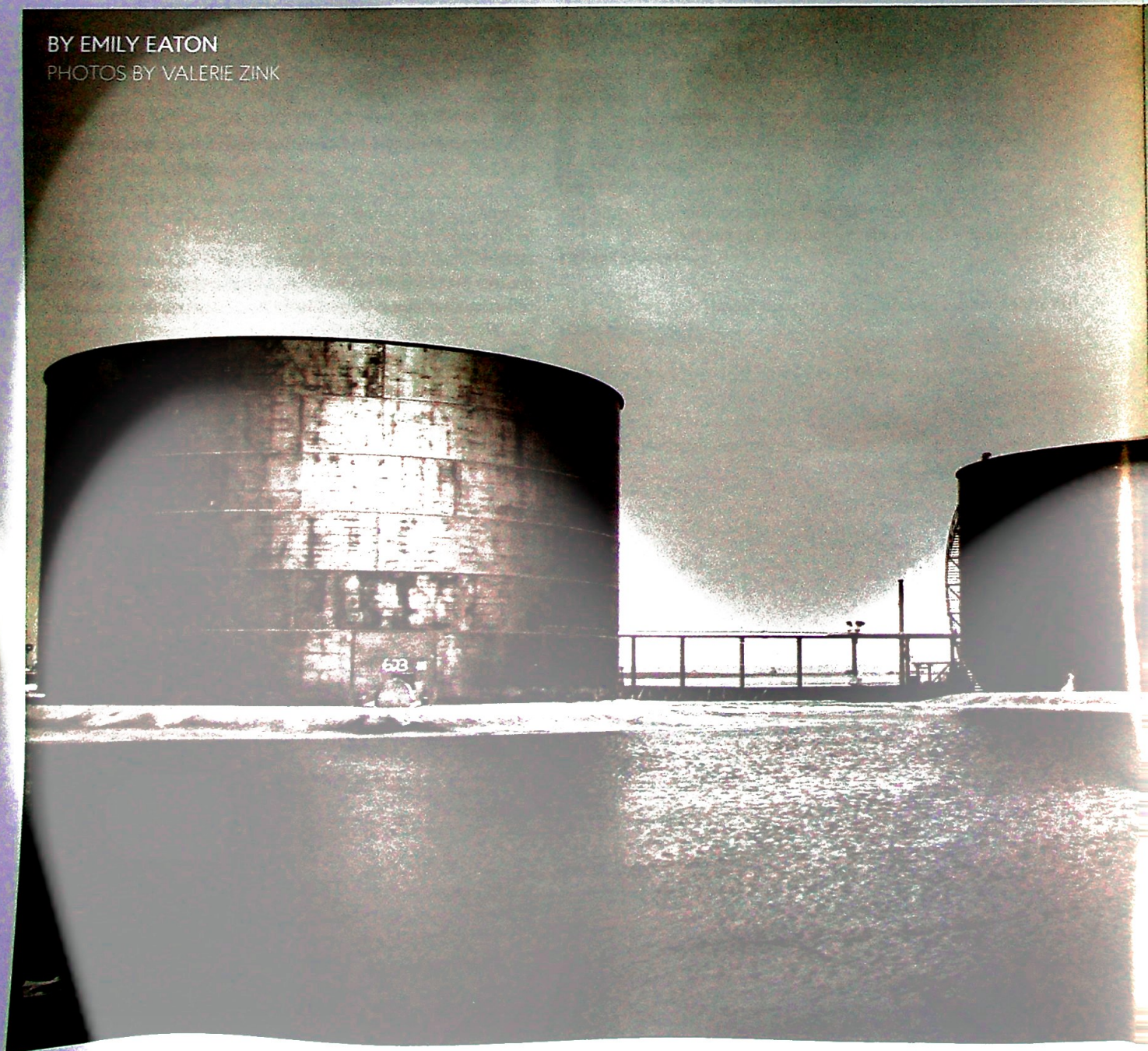
—VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE
"Direct Action"

Inside Saskatchewan's Oil Economy

An adapted excerpt from *Fault Lines: Life and Landscape in Saskatchewan's Oil Economy*

BY EMILY EATON

PHOTOS BY VALERIE ZINK



Oil is only one of the natural resources that fuel Saskatchewan's export-led economy. Long a peripheral province in the confederation, Saskatchewan's rural areas were largely cleared of Indigenous peoples and settled as agricultural communities producing bulk commodities for international markets. In the mid-1900s rural agricultural areas in the south became host to oil and potash extraction, while uranium mining pushed into the province's north. Rural residents of oil-producing

communities have lived through the ups and downs of the industry since the early 1950s when commercial production of oil began to flourish. Moreover, many see oil as fundamental to their futures – futures that will include the inevitable booms and busts inherent in resource-extractive economies. Oil is therefore fundamental to the history, present, and future of many regions in Saskatchewan, especially given the latest and largest oil boom that began in the mid-2000s and ended in 2014. In fact, a narrative I often heard from those working in the field views oil as the foundation of modern life and essential to notions of freedom. For many of the people I spoke with, a future without oil amounts to “turning back the clock” – regressing to a period without leisure time, travel, or mechanized farm production. And to the extent that alternative employment and economies scarcely exist, oil is synonymous with reality itself. In many communities where oil has been a long-standing fixture of life, criticisms of fossil fuels and the industry are understood as threats to the present and future of life and livelihood.

Saskatchewan's recent oil boom coincided with a broader economic boom in the province (dubbed “Saskaboom”) and has contributed to a palpable sense of excitement and energy. But the collapse of world oil prices starting in the fall of 2014 called into question the future of Saskatchewan's oil boom. Suddenly, the government froze discretionary spending and hiring, drilling rigs left the province, and oil companies asked their contractors to do more work for less compensation. There is no doubt that rural communities are already experiencing the negative impacts associated with the bust. Unemployment and vacancy rates are on the rise, and in one major oil-producing city a long-standing hotel and bar has announced it will close. It is yet too soon to understand the depth and breadth of the impacts of the bust. But since oil prices are not expected to rebound any time soon, rural areas are bracing for a long downturn.

HOSTING THE OIL INDUSTRY

“There's no motherhood and apple pie in the oil industry.”—Landowner

In the business of oil, the separate ownership of surface and subsurface property rights causes a lot of headaches. For the majority of farmers and ranchers in Saskatchewan, who own only the surface rights to the land, the income they derive from hosting oil leases is small, ranging from C\$2,000 to C\$3,500 per year per lease with a single well. As established in the Saskatchewan Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act, surface leases are meant to compensate surface owners based on the agricultural value of the land, the loss of its use, adverse effects, nuisance, damage, and costs associated with severing leases from larger tracts. Thus, the perception that landowners are getting rich from hosting infrastructure is largely false: by the definition of the Act, they are being compensated for the lost agricultural use of their lands. At this rate of compensation, farmers must play host to a large number of wells in order to make a substantial income from surface leases. Nevertheless, in Saskatchewan's oil-producing areas, many landowners welcome new surface leases and use the stable oil income to supplement inconsistent farm incomes that result from fluctuating commodity prices and unpredictable weather and pests. For families trying to resist farm consolidation and corporatization, oil lease income, though only meant to compensate for lost agricultural use, can be the difference between selling the farm and staying on the land.

Farmers and ranchers who own mineral rights are few and far between in the province – just 25 per cent of Saskatchewan oil rights are held in private hands (known as freehold rights), and these rights are not always held by the same surface owner. Unlike surface rights owners, private mineral rights owners are compensated handsomely through annual payments of oil royalties that provide them with a substantial ongoing income that



Oil tank at Arlington

more than accounts for the nuisance of surface leases. Thus, in any given landowning community, a complicated landscape of oil interests structures farmers' and ranchers' relationships to the industry.

While many rural landowners welcome new oil leases, others have become unwilling hosts to oil

land and made their livelihood from it for generations. Referencing Thomas King's book *The Inconvenient Indian*, one rancher I interviewed suggested there is a parallel to be drawn between the displacement of Indigenous peoples through colonization and the situation of ranchers who find themselves in the way of the oil industry. According to him, "We

as rural areas become depopulated and landowners become absentees) are worse off, without even the chance to negotiate the range of provisions that some landowners have been able to achieve – including specifications related to lease maintenance and reclamation.

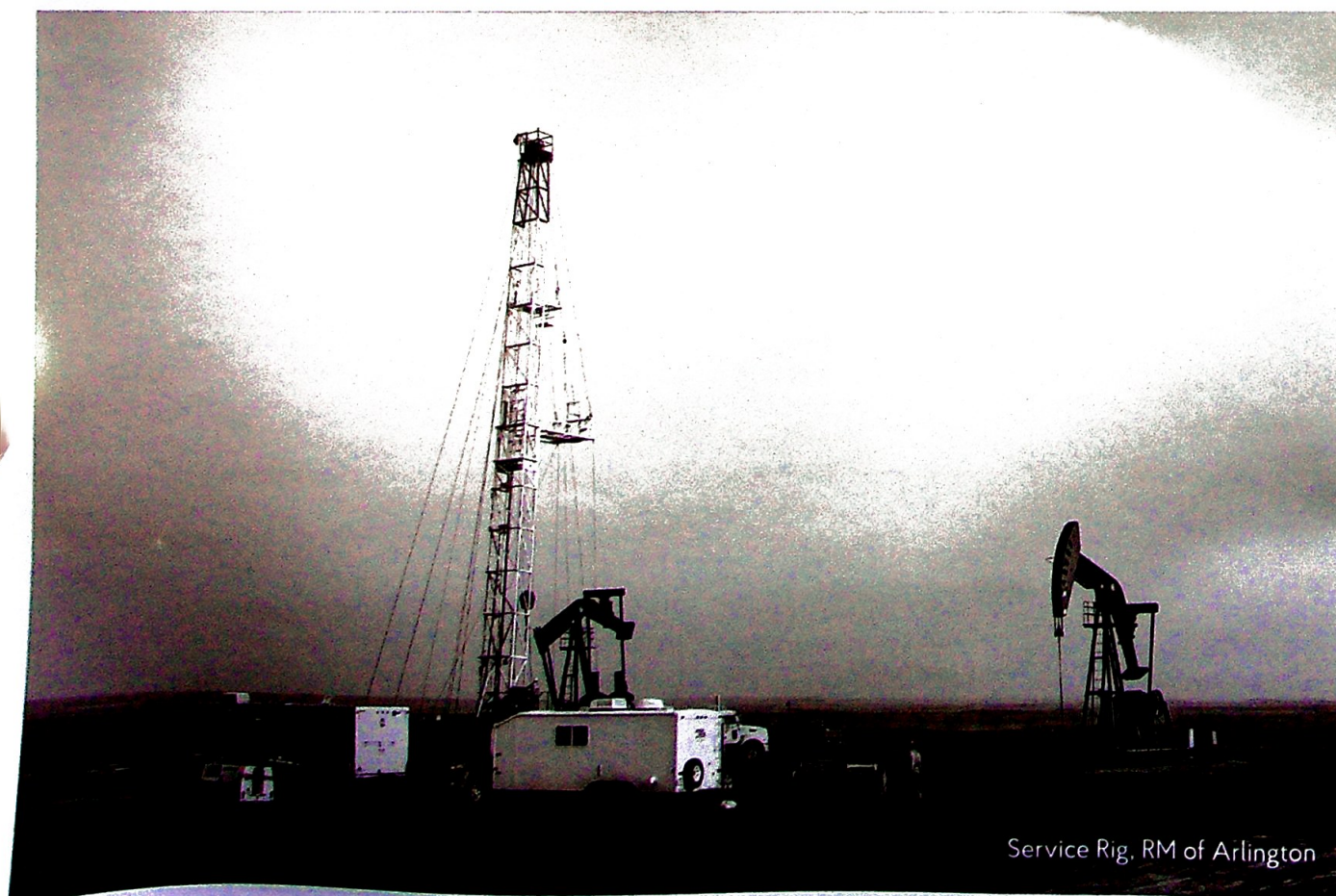
Ranchers and farmers who have become unwilling hosts to oil infrastructure have many colourful expletives to describe the companies whose oil wells, batteries, tanks, drilling rigs, disposal pits, flare stacks, flow lines (small pipelines connecting individual wells to batteries and tanks), and power lines are unwanted intrusions on their lands. These landowners have a broad range of complaints related to the oil infrastructure in their backyards, whether or not they initially welcomed the oil leases. The most common complaints of the landowners interviewed for this research have to do with how oil leases disrupt the practice of farming and ranching. During their (regulated) daily checks on wells

The perception that landowners are getting rich from hosting infrastructure is largely false.

infrastructure. When mineral rights are sold, either by the Crown (which holds 75 per cent of mineral rights in the province), or by other private owners, surface owners have no recourse; they must allow companies onto their lands in order to access the oil. Surface rights legislation provides companies legal access to their minerals through a "right of way" regardless of the surface owners' wishes and without consideration given to the families who have stewarded the

are now the inconvenient landowner."

Even if the landowner refuses the terms of a surface lease, an oil company can obtain a right of entry, provided through legislation, and be drilling within two weeks of the breakdown of negotiations. This has led members of the Saskatchewan Surface Rights Organization to argue that leases are one-sided. Without the right to say no, landowners are without bargaining chips in the negotiations. Those renting farmland (increasingly the case



Service Rig, RM of Arlington

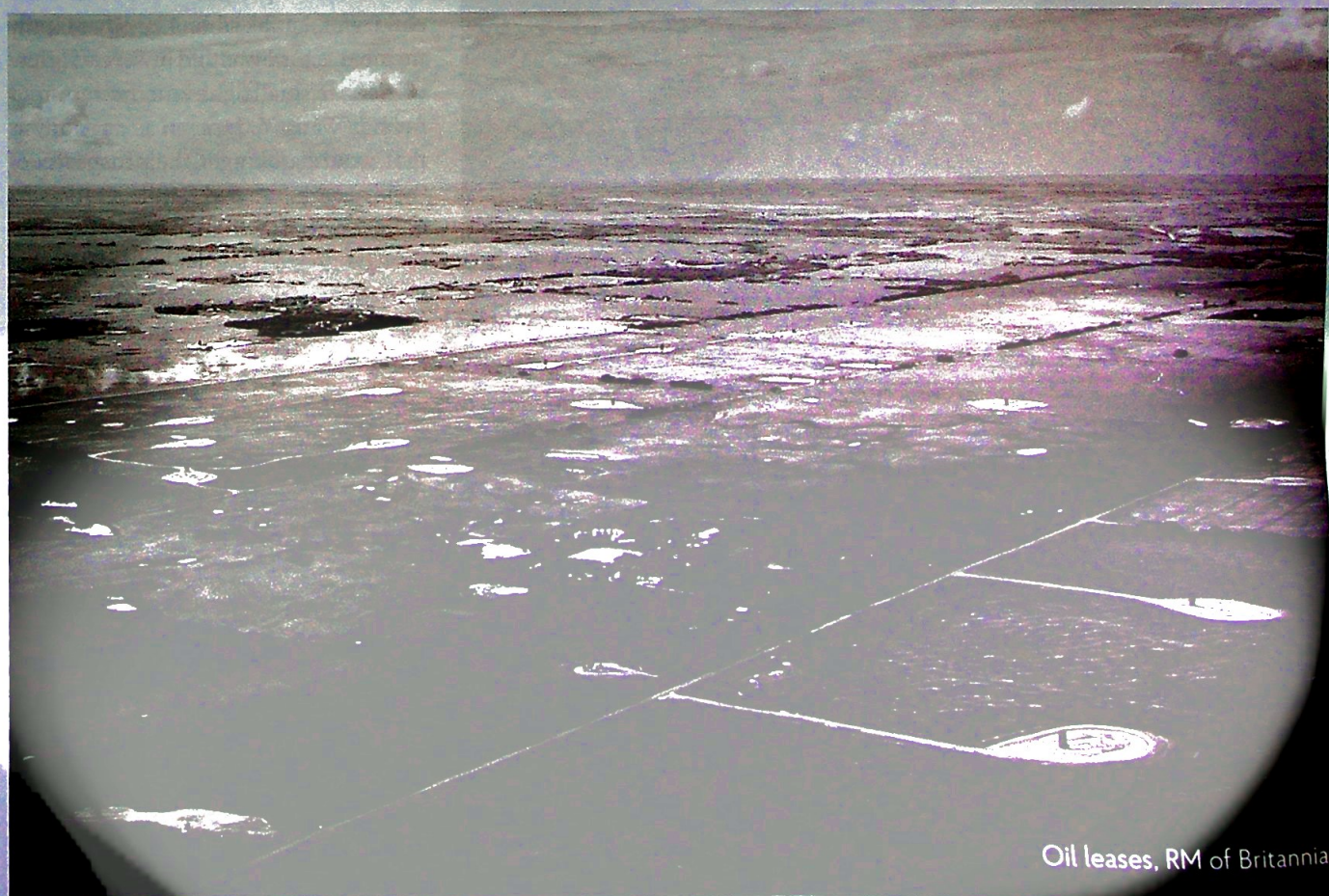
companies leave gates open – causing animals to escape, plug up Texas gates with mud, and bring unwanted weeds onto lease sites, causing disruption to crops. Access roads and flow lines fragment fields because farm equipment cannot be driven over them. Wells are often placed in the most inconvenient and ecologically sensitive locations. Drilling operations compact soils and mix up soil horizons, compromising crops on lease sites. Companies leave behind garbage that blows across fields. Animals become sick and even die when they ingest debris left on lease sites or, on rare occasions, get caught in pumpjacks. Citing such incidents and hassles, many landowners argue that the \$2,500 they get for a lease doesn't even cover the associated costs to the farming operation.

More severe land impacts experienced by ranchers and farmers include leaks and spills, the most damaging of which are caused not by oil, but by highly salinated

water. In fact, in many ways the oil industry is more accurately in the business of waste management, given that they must properly dispose of the water that accounts for 75 to 95 per cent of each barrel extracted. The sheer volume of "produced water" that companies must dispose of at their own cost means that the potential for spills is significant. One landowner in the southeast of the province has a particularly remarkable story regarding a battery site that he has been fighting to get cleaned up since the 1980s. A leaking salt water tank had not only destroyed the battery site, but the land surrounding the site was no longer suitable for crops because of high levels of soil salinity. According to this landowner, successive companies that had taken over the lease had hired environmental consultants to study the site, but the studies had piled up over the years without any action. While spilled oil will biodegrade over time, salt is a persistent contaminant. Proper remediation would have included digging out the damaged

soil and replacing it, but successive companies attempted to deal with the problem by flushing out the site with water. This only spread the salt further into the landscape and into surrounding surface water and dugouts. Exasperated, this landowner no longer has any faith that the contamination will ever be cleaned up. Not even the regulators, who had been out to see the site, seemed to be able to force the company into action. As he explains, government "will tell you that they have a big stick that they can swing, but they don't swing it. Grow the economy. Environment can come later. [With] all the money we made growing the economy now we can take it and clean up the environment. That's how smart they are."

In another case, a rancher in the west-central region experienced a major pipeline leak on his land. So much oil was spilled that when the company came to notify the rancher and his wife in the middle of the night, they told them to pack their bags and leave their



Oil leases, RM of Britannia



Mandy, Shaunavon



Hunger strike, Onion Lake Cree Nation

property on foot to avoid turning on their ignitions. The couple stayed in a hotel in a neighbouring town for a month while the spill was being cleaned up. Returning to his property daily to check on his animals, the rancher found the smell difficult to take and the animals huddled in the corner furthest away from the spill. When a company representative came out to brief the rancher about the cleanup, the rancher advocated aggressively that thorough and swift remediation measures be taken. In response, the company representative reminded the rancher that his grandson drove a steam truck for the company, suggesting that his job might be terminated should the rancher be too

demanding.

This rancher's story illustrates the extent to which the oil industry's deep penetration constrains and shapes individual landowners' abilities to advocate for themselves and their land. In the context of a declining and consolidating agricultural economy in rural Saskatchewan, the oil industry offers one of the only and best opportunities for employment. In fact, on top of hosting infrastructure, many landowners are also contracted by the industry. In addition to running their farms, farmers might truck for oil companies or even work on drilling rigs. On a more informal scale, landowners offer services such as snow removal, weed

control, access to surface water, disposal of drilling mud, and much more. Many of these landowners are the same ones who complain of inadequate surface lease compensation and the nuisances outlined above. Landowners are thus in a complicated and ambiguous position vis-à-vis the oil industry; they are stuck with the oil leases and are attempting to make the most of their situations. They wrestle with the question of whether the surface lease income properly compensates them for the nuisance, and they worry about the safety of infrastructure as it ages. For these reasons, many criticisms of the industry are preceded by caveats like "I'm not anti-industry, it has done wonderful things for our community and my children, but..."

In this context of tight ties and involvement with industry, advocating for proper compensation and remediation of contaminated lands is problematic. If a landowner is not actively working for an oil company, it is sure that their child, grandchild, sibling, or other family member is. As I was told by several interviewees, in small tight-knit communities nobody wants to be seen as anti-oil, as that would endanger the prosperity of their neighbours and family. Criticisms of the environmental impacts of extraction are deemed particularly off-limits, even though farmers and ranchers understand themselves as stewards of the land. For the most part, landowners struggle through the environmental, health, and land-management impacts in silence.

One of the only organizations in Saskatchewan that advocates for those experiencing the impacts that come with hosting oil infrastructure is the Saskatchewan Surface Rights Organization. Organized into regional "sections," surface rights groups are engaging in a form of self-help. The west-central section has hired a former "land man" who used to be contracted by oil companies to negotiate surface leases with landowners, and therefore has inside knowledge of the industry.

This former land man helps individual landowners take their cases to the Saskatchewan Surface Rights Board of Arbitration, where they can attempt to get limited compensation for nuisances and breach of the terms of leases. Landowners complain that the surface rights legislation does not allow for adequate compensation, and that the board members, appointed by the province, work in the interest of the companies rather than the landowners. Clearly there are limitations to this practice of self-help. While landowners are learning from each other's cases, the approach remains a fundamentally individual one and is limited by the terms of the surface rights legislation. Furthermore, some landowners report being typecast as anti-industry for their involvement with the organization, and there are likely many

If a landowner is not actively working for an oil company, it is sure that their child, grandchild, sibling, or other family member is.

more too timid to even pursue their cases with the surface rights groups. According to one rancher active in a surface rights organization, his neighbours "wouldn't join the surface rights group because they plough snow in the winter time for the oil wells, so there's a conflict of interest and a lot of farmers that plough snow and stuff, they're scared to associate themselves with us. But I don't think that the oil companies are too upset about it." A cultural attitude of independence and masculinity also precludes landowners from getting together. As one farmer said, "There's also a cowboy mentality. It's you alone against the elements and the world and why should you associate? I mean, I'll look after myself. I've got a six-gun and I can handle these guys."

CONCLUSION

In a province that has long considered itself Alberta's poor cousin, enthusiasm for oil extraction during the recent economic boom was palpable. No longer a recipient of federal transfer payments, the province boasts that the economic tides have turned

and that people are returning home to forge a life and livelihood in the cities and rural communities of Saskatchewan. The oil economy has been an important factor in this sense of provincial renewal, and many people in oil-producing regions are truly thankful for its contribution to this economic revival.

Conversations about the impacts of extraction are, however, surprisingly absent from the public discourse about oil extraction. This is not because rural and Indigenous communities are unaffected. Rather, it is because of the fragility and complexity of residents' relationships with industry. For the hosts of oil infrastructure, complaints that call into question the legitimacy and desirability of the industry can lead to blowback from community members and leadership. In

this context, it is much more realistic to fight for better compensation from oil companies through organizations like surface rights groups than to risk alienation for pointing to environmental and health impacts or the loss of traditional livelihood practices such as hunting and collecting medicines and berries. For those servicing the boom, the profound relationship of inequality between oil field and non-oil field work is willfully overlooked because such jobs would disappear without a thriving industry. As this book illustrates, people are not unaware of or unaffected by oil's impacts: alternative economies and sources of employment are hard to come by.

The global crash in oil prices over the winter of 2014-15 has thrust the future of Saskatchewan's oil economy into a period of uncertainty. Oil field service companies like Halliburton have already announced that they are closing down operations in the province, drilling has slowed down dramatically, and the reduction in oil royalties has strained

government coffers. It is unclear for how long oil prices will stay low. Oil giants like Saudi Arabia are currently flooding the international market in order to drive many costly, unconventional operations in North America and elsewhere out of business. It is yet too soon to tell whether the next uptick in world prices will bring unconventional fields back online. Regardless, without a drastic change in course, oil-producing communities are destined to continue their precarious positions in cycles of boom and bust. Contemporary booms and busts are, however, playing out within broader forces that are making family farms more precarious, weather more unpredictable, and rural and Indigenous spaces more subject to the vagaries of international financial flows and markets. Arguably, much of the social and economic infrastructure that rural families counted on during times of hardship has been stripped away.

The recent downturn, although certainly painful for oil-producing regions, also opens up opportunities to articulate a different future. The burden is on us all to bring to life alternatives that can break the cycle of boom and bust and that are more environmentally and socially just. In so doing, we ought to defend people's rights to livelihood, and their choices to stay in the communities that they call home and on the lands that they have stewarded for generations. ★

Excerpt from *Fault Lines: Life and Landscape in Saskatchewan's Oil Economy*, published by University of Manitoba Press in 2016.



EMILY EATON is an associate professor of geography at the University of Regina specializing in political economy and ecology.



VALERIE ZINK is a photographer living in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

STATES OF EMERGENCY

Confronting the erasure of Indigenous women and two-spirited people in HIV movements

Awarded the annual Andrea Walker Memorial Fund grant, Lindsay Nixon explores what makes the colonial world risky for Indigenous peoples with HIV.



BY LINDSAY NIXON
ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN CRAZYBULL

In the early fall of 2016, a coalition of doctors in Saskatchewan called a public health emergency over an AIDS crisis. They were referring to the staggering HIV infection rate in Saskatchewan, which, at almost 14 people per 100,000, is nearly double the national average of 7.8 people per 100,000. The doctors say Indigenous people are particularly at risk, with an infection rate of 64 per 100,000 on reserves in Saskatchewan. But the Indigenous AIDS crisis is not restricted to that province. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) reports that 80,469 cases of HIV have been reported between 1985, when the agency first began collecting data, and 2014, the most recent year available. Since 2008, the number of reported HIV cases each year has gradually declined, and in 2014, 2,044 cases of HIV were reported. In 2014, working with ethnicity data for 58 per cent of the cases reported that year, Aboriginal peoples (in the language of the federal government) made up 16 per cent of HIV cases reported, a stunning number given that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis represent only 4.3 per cent of Canada's total population as of 2011 statistics. Among those who reported injection drug use (IDU) exposure, a staggering 51 per cent reported being Aboriginal.

Where medical narratives place Indigenous people "at risk of" or "vulnerable" to HIV/AIDS, I am reminded of a conversation I had with someone on the National Indigenous Youth Council on Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS at the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN). Indigenous girls, trans youth, and gender-nonconforming youth aren't at risk, they said – the world is risky for them. HIV prevalence within Indigenous communities is part of a legacy of colonialism that impacts our bodies. Jessica Danforth, former executive director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, said at a conference: "I hate that we portray Indigenous youth as 'at risk.' At risk of what? Colonialism?" The staggering statistics never tell the whole story; it's only by understanding how colonialism and white supremacy function to erase Indigenous people that we can engage with the Indigenous AIDS crisis.

HIV statistics ought to be subjected to healthy amounts of critical analysis. The information from the PHAC race/ethnicity and exposure category from 1998 to 2014 is available for only 41 per cent of those who reported. While PHAC is a federally mandated agency, its collection and management of statistics varies by province. Quebec, for instance, doesn't collect or submit ethnicity data to PHAC, and prior to 2009, neither did Ontario (and in Ontario, ethnicity data for AIDS cases is unavailable after 2004). Manitoba does not provide disaggregated data on Aboriginal peoples. But above all, HIV statistics must be understood to represent people. The 2010 CAAN strategy for Indigenous women in Canada, *Environments of Nurturing Safety*, reinforces this: "These numbers represent our sisters, daughters, aunts, nieces, cousins, mothers, granddaughters and grandmothers."

Still, it is important to engage with the available statistics

in order to better understand how the crisis uniquely affects Indigenous women and two-spirited people. Between 2009 and 2014, PHAC reported that Indigenous women represented 40 per cent of HIV cases reported among all women. Indigenous women who are injection drug users are twice as likely as their Indigenous male counterparts to be HIV positive. *Environments of Nurturing Safety* has noted that Indigenous women account for nearly half of all cumulative HIV infections, and they represent the highest proportion of HIV infection due to IDU. Indigenous women report feeling fearful of stigma and discrimination, both from institutional care providers as well as within their own communities, and this negatively affects their participation in HIV/AIDS testing and accessing antiretroviral therapy. Significant barriers to accessing health services and social support, from distrust of colonial institutions to fear of stigmatization, have resulted in a high incidence of AIDS-related illnesses, low CD4 (T helper cell) counts, impaired immune systems, and high rates of mortality among HIV-positive Indigenous women.

Statistics on HIV in Canada do not include trans, gender-nonconforming, and two-spirited people because testing clinics that report their data to PHAC collect only binary gender information, so clients are forced to place themselves in one of two gender categories. Including two-spirited youth in the analysis of HIV means recognizing that two-spirited youth often migrate from their home communities to cities to escape homophobia, stigmatization, and discrimination. Once in the city, they are often overrepresented in street economies and can experience difficulty finding appropriate housing, a lack of social supports, low-income status, and a deterioration of their mental and physical health, including HIV exposure and the onset of AIDS symptoms.

The grave statistics are met with distressing institutional responses. While Indigenous people were marked as a key population for PHAC funding through the national HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund, organizations like the Black Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance in Montreal were denied funding in the 2016 cuts to programming. The future of CAAN is also uncertain, having had 70 per cent of its budget slashed. The Native Women's Association of Canada, which is not a community-based HIV organization and has been critiqued for its platform on sex workers that carries implications for their increased HIV exposure, has received funding. While PHAC allocated funding to three national Indigenous-centric organizations and to at least 16 diverse, province-specific Indigenous organizations in order to address HIV levels in various communities, what happens when organizations integral to Indigenous AIDS responses like CAAN don't have stable funding? Where can Indigenous communities find accessible, localized services that are specific to their needs? Without funding for HIV/AIDS services for Indigenous people, can we hold out hope that community organizations will do this work, or are we facing a public health emergency that erases Indigenous women

and two-spirited people? Institutional erasure – within government, research, and community organizing – of Indigenous women and two-spirited people compounds the funding cuts to systemically entrench inadequate responses, putting these communities at an increased long-term risk.

Existing institutional and knowledge production in a colonial society will never yield the radical grassroots HIV organizing that is so essential for the health of Indigenous women and two-spirited peoples. This article calls for an intervention into the white-settler queer and trans HIV organizing methods that contribute to the colonial erasure of Indigenous bodies. HIV organizers and researchers must consistently resist colonial responses to AIDS that have failed HIV-positive Indigenous women and two-spirited folks, who are disproportionately affected by HIV in Canada.

RENDERED INVISIBLE

While I was collecting oral histories of Indigenous HIV/AIDS organizing, an Elder shared with me how HIV-positive Indigenous women have been organizing in the HIV movement from the beginning. However, mainstream HIV researchers and organizers don't often hear these histories, and many haven't spent time with Indigenous communities to see their responses to HIV/AIDS. This erasure of Indigenous woman and two-spirited people within HIV movements is multi-faceted, and maintained by research and by government programming.

Many HIV community organizers have argued that the problem with HIV responses is their top-down hierarchies and homogenization, citing the location of this error within the government's management and allocation of HIV funding, and calling for community-defined HIV strategies. While such analysis correctly attributes some of the failures to a capitalist health-care system, the arguments also need an anti-colonial analysis. Indigenous women and two-spirited folks are often homogenized in HIV organizing and research as intravenous drug users, resulting in community responses to HIV that fail to address colonial processes and further compound the AIDS crisis in Indigenous communities. Factors like misogyny, an insistence on white subjectivity, and the dominant ways in which the HIV movement is historicized each contribute to this erasure.

DOMINANT SUBJECTIVITIES

Misogyny and white fragility among gay men is nothing new, but it does result in the erasure of Indigenous women and two-spirited people from HIV movements. Writer Seán Faye explains that, while it's true that gay men have been oppressed

within Euro-American Judeo-Christian society, we can find a "class-inflected" dominance among communities of gay white men, "an ideal of social bonding and advancement realisable only for wealthy and educated men." By 1973, explains Faye, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a group that held the first London Pride march, was fracturing around misogyny and gender. A 1976 article in the socialist journal *Gay Left* describes it: "The male gay movement, instead of challenging and confronting sexism, became increasingly defensive." We see these attitudes of defensiveness within HIV organizing as well, where white cis men tend to flatten issues of race and gender and see them as divisive.

In his book *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*, Scott Lauria Morgensen discusses how settler colonialism manifests within contemporary LGBTQ communities, despite gender and sexual diversity. Dominant queer and transgender communities often reproduce settler colonialism and settler subjects, which continues settler-colonial relationships between (queer and transgender) white settlers and Indigenous peoples. Just as white liberal feminists clustered feminist histories into waves that focused on gaining legal rights, so has white liberal HIV theory bracketed HIV/AIDS histories around white-led organizing. For instance, Ted Kerr has cited Black, Indigenous, and people of colour's (BIPOC) perspectives and realities as the newly emerging second wave of HIV histories, following the so-called first wave of HIV activism, which started with white cis gay men. This arguably absolves white cisgender men from taking responsibility for upholding colonial and white supremacist hierarchies within HIV/AIDS organizing.

My own early education in HIV histories was centred in a white liberal framework, mirroring what feminist scholars often refer to as white liberal feminism – an individualistic feminist theory, frequently relying on the acquisition of legal rights like wage equity and reproductive rights to demonstrate equality status. Similarly, a common retelling of the HIV movement in the U.S. and Canada centres the organizing and subjectivities of white cisgender men. One such critical

Indigenous girls, trans youth, and gender-nonconforming youth aren't at risk – the world is risky for them. HIV prevalence within Indigenous communities is part of a legacy of colonialism that impacts our bodies.

milestone is the work in the late 1980s and early 1990s of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which campaigned for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to release antiretroviral medication that had the potential of halting AIDS and AIDS-related illness. The access was life-saving for many, but legalizing access to antiretroviral therapy through the health system does not guarantee access to that therapy for *all* HIV-positive people; it improves access only for those individuals who can easily and readily navigate the system – and most often, those people are

cisgender white men. Too frequently, Indigenous people experience financial and personal barriers to accessing therapy. But popular tellings of that milestone event don't usually include that the achievement benefited only relatively few HIV-positive people.

Canadian HIV researchers' over-identification with U.S. HIV organizing often leads them to be inattentive to the histories of Canadian HIV organizing within our own colonial borders, including the many communities that are present throughout the Canadian HIV movement and yet are absent in the retelling of these histories. When the dominant subjectivity of HIV is imagined to be white, male, cisgender, and Americanized, institutional responses in government policy and research follow suit.

GOVERNMENT AND RESEARCH

The ways in which governments erase Indigenous peoples are obvious, and these legislative failures bring HIV responses to an impasse. When Saskatchewan physicians called a state of emergency over HIV rates and recommended that the government direct resources to public education, universal screening, and support provision, the provincial government ignored the call, citing the fact that the Public Health Act does not allow the province to call a state of emergency. What's more, since it expired in 2014, the province no longer has an HIV strategy. Tracing erasure among researchers and community organizers is trickier because many of them are not directly accountable to the public but still inform community responses to HIV in ways that privilege white cisgender men. In a talk at Concordia University entitled "Ending HIV/AIDS," an epidemiologist and researcher with the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, Dr. M-J Milloy, discussed his research historicizing the HIV/AIDS outbreak of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside without unpacking colonial factors: he didn't describe the Indigenous communities of the Downtown Eastside, nor did he include an analysis of gender in populations there. He also failed to address how settler colonialism affects the lives of the Indigenous peoples in that community, and thereby their relationship to HIV status. When settler researchers like Milloy ignore colonial analysis, they cannot possibly produce research that addresses the ways in which HIV and AIDS specifically impact Indigenous communities.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

In a workshop on HIV/AIDS organizing in 2014, I witnessed responses to HIV that were utterly devoid of an understanding of coloniality. One of the ideas raised in the workshop was to hold a flash performance with the message: "Don't get tested." The

idea behind this slogan was that, if a person refuses to get tested and never knows their status, they won't be criminalized for having HIV. But Indigenous people face almost insurmountable barriers in accessing testing, and they get tested later than non-Indigenous people, at times in the later stages of HIV. Groups like the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and organizers like Carrie Martin at the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal have been working for years to make sure that Indigenous people resist

stigma and get tested regularly.

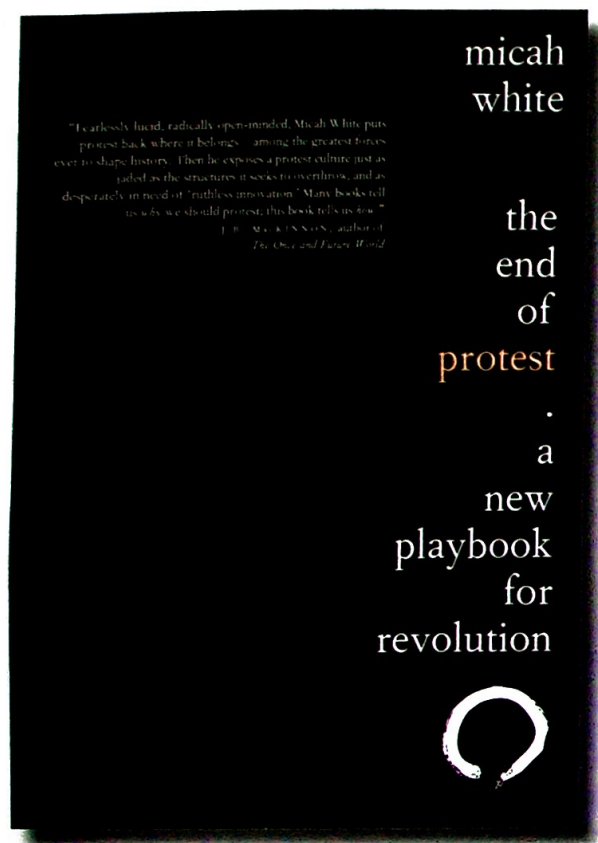
The workshopped slogan completely undermined this work. Moreover, this action does little to address the fact that Indigenous people are continually criminalized, and this inherent criminality projected upon Indigenous bodies is much more complex than simplistic understandings of HIV culpability.

REIMAGINING RESPONSES

Responses to AIDS in Canada need to be community-based and Indigenous-led. "'One size fits all' approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention that fail to consider the uneven conditions of risk across diverse populations have proven ineffective for increasing knowledge," write Sarah Flicker et al. "By 'culturally safe,' we mean services that move 'beyond the concept of cultural sensitivity to analyzing power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonization and relationships with colonizers, as they apply to healthcare,'" they write, quoting the National Aboriginal Health Organization. Indigenous people need responses to HIV that are relevant and that acknowledge that they have long been erased in prevalent HIV programming. However, let's take this as a call to reintroduce Indigenous people into HIV histories, to imagine responses that will meet Indigenous peoples where they are at – in the midst of an AIDS crisis. When we envision HIV futures, and the community-based responses we require, we must be as creative and dynamic as our communities themselves. We must do HIV research and organizing with an understanding that Indigenous women and two-spirited folks have unique and diverse needs in addressing the impacts of HIV/AIDS within their communities. We must endeavour to support those in our communities most affected by HIV and AIDS, instead of remaining complicit in Indigenous erasure and death. ★



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The End of Protest: A New Playbook For Revolution

By Micah White

Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2016

Reviewed by David Camfield

A title that appeals to right-wingers who dismiss occupations and traffic disruptions. A subtitle that intrigues radicals. An author who formerly worked at the magazine *Adbusters* and is billed as a co-creator of Occupy Wall Street. Now available in eight languages, including Chinese and Japanese, there's no disputing that Micah White's book is an international marketing success. In Canada, White's book tour in the spring of 2016 was widely covered in the mainstream media.

The fact that the author of a book about social change taps mainstream media interest isn't by itself a good reason to pan their ideas. But the attention paid to White, whose book's website proclaims that "mass mobilizations no longer change society," is nothing to celebrate.

The failure of Occupy Wall Street to do what White thought it could do – "bring an end to the influence of money on democracy, overthrow the corporatocracy of the 1 percent [and] solve income inequality" – led him to rethink

his politics. That kind of rethinking is not a bad thing. Unreflectively holding on to a set of ideas about how to change society is a recipe for dogmatism, even with the best theory. The problem lies in the conclusions that White drew from Occupy: *The End of Protest* suggests that

people could gain sovereign protection from police repression by enacting collective, consensual democracy ... no government could resist the united chorus of its citizens expressing themselves with democratic fervour." Such comforting notions are central to

UNREFLECTIVELY HOLDING ON TO A SET OF IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO CHANGE SOCIETY IS A RECIPE FOR DOGMATISM, EVEN WITH THE BEST THEORY.

the future of efforts to change society will be a combination of electoral politics and cultural "meme warfare."

White is clear about the beliefs that he once held (and that plenty of people share), which were proven wrong by the U.S. state's response to Occupy: "that we live in a representative, responsive democracy that ultimately bows, out of self-restraint, to the demands of the people ... that the

the liberal-democratic ideology that gives legitimacy to capitalist democracy, even as governments of all stripes move to make people more dependent on markets and oversee rising greenhouse gas emissions. White may have shed these beliefs, but he expounds others that are even more implausible.

White proposes a grandiose "unified theory of revolution" and a strategy for

WHITE IS CLEAR ABOUT THE BELIEFS THAT HE ONCE HELD (AND THAT PLENTY OF PEOPLE SHARE), WHICH WERE PROVEN WRONG BY THE U.S. STATE'S RESPONSE TO OCCUPY: "THAT WE LIVE IN A REPRESENTATIVE, RESPONSIVE DEMOCRACY THAT ULTIMATELY BOWS, OUT OF SELF-RESTRAINT, TO THE DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE."

change. The theory purports to synthesize the major theories of revolution. What's missing is a coherent understanding of how societies in general and capitalist societies in particular actually work. He argues that, today, the approach that will yield the highest results combines an emphasis on both theurgism – "the esoteric branch of activism," with its belief that "only God can save us now" – and subjectivism, whose maxim is, "change your inner reality to change your external reality."

Loosely defining revolution as a change in "legal regime" leaves White unable to distinguish between major reforms, political revolutions that alter the state or who controls it, and social revolutions that bring about a change from one socio-economic system to another. The reader is treated to erroneous interpretations of historical events (the Roman emperor Constantine made Christianity the new official religion because of a successful meme that he dreamt ... yet this move apparently didn't have anything to do with Christianity's appeal to a group of rulers in a particular

place and time...?) and society today ("Climate change is happening because of the state of our minds" is one of many howlers). There are plenty of pretentious predictions about the future, too.

What's White's political alternative? An "Internet-enabled participatory populism" that goes beyond left and right. He argues for taking control of municipal governments in rural areas and scaling them up on a global level; he also predicts the emergence of a women-led World Party that will embrace this electoral plan. The example he connects most strongly to the World Party strategy, though, is Italy's Five Star Movement – evidence of White's poor political judgment. This Italian party is, as David Broder wrote for *Jacobin*, "a hybrid of the Pirate Party and the U.K. Independence Party. Its platform is libertarian, skeptical of the eurozone, and populist; opposed to the liberal establishment and governed by strong anti-migrant and anti-public-sector sentiments."

People who are rightly worried about the weaknesses of today's protest activism

won't find a productive exploration of them in *The End of Protest*. Instead, start with Umair Muhammad's *Confronting Injustice: Social Activism in the Age of Individualism*. Then move on to Richard Seymour's *Against Austerity: How We can Fix the Crisis They Made* and Alan Sears' *The Next New Left: A History of the Future*. These books help us to understand why resistance in recent years hasn't been more effective. And if it's revolution in the 21st century that's on your mind, look online for "The Realism of Audacity: Rethinking Revolutionary Strategy Today" and other articles by Panagiotis Sotiris. ★



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SUSTAINER PROFILE #42

ENDA BROPHY



Enda teaches communication, political economy, and labour at Simon Fraser University, and is a past contributor to *Briarpatch*. Along with his partner, he parents two rambunctious little girls who teach him all about the importance of resistance to authority. He dedicates whatever time remains in life to soccer, playing for Falconetti's East Side Football Club in Vancouver and supporting A.S. Roma in the winter and the Vancouver Whitecaps in the summer.

What hooked you on teaching communication, political economy, and labour?

I had some pretty great teachers. Among them was Bob Everton, a survivor of the Santiago National Stadium in Chile during the Pinochet coup and a longtime community organizer in East Vancouver. Sadly, Bob passed away in 2004. I now teach a couple of the courses he taught me in back in the day.

Any advice for new parents on raising anti-authoritarian children?

Hold on for dear life.

What's the best thing you've read recently?

Debt: The First 5000 Years, by David Graeber. It made my summer. But I also really loved a collection of Silvia Federici's, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*.

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Who Controls the Climate Discourse?

I think we have a problem of the imagination. At least I do. Sometimes I try to imagine what our society would look like if we reached carbon neutrality, what it would look and taste and feel like, and I struggle to form an image, or possible scenarios. How will we get around, what will we eat, what will work and leisure look like?

This future, and the transition to it, ought to be the focal points of our time. Canada is one of the highest per-capita carbon emitters in the world, after all, and we have to get near carbon neutral by 2050 to have a shot at a somewhat-stable climate.

Part of the imagination problem, I think, stems from who's in control of the discourse. A quick look at the provincial and federal environment ministers in Canada, climate policy scholars, the heads of environmental NGOs, and corporate social responsibility professionals (not to mention the CEOs calling the shots) skews white, male, affluent, and urban.

I asked Detroit-based organizer and co-editor of the visionary fiction collection *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* adrienne maree brown what happens when one demographic steers the climate discourse. "It gets boring," she says. "[It] becomes a loop that slowly bores the shit out of everyone."

brown's comment speaks to the echo chamber that is climate policy. Those discussions rarely focus on what would be different in the day-to-day experience of our current society compared to a low-carbon future. Instead, we hear about market-based measures, like British Columbia's carbon tax, the efficacy of which remains to be seen, and carbon cap-and-trade systems. Carbon becomes a commodity in these schemes, either being taxed or treated as tradable on capital markets, with little other discernable change. These approaches fit neatly into corporate capitalism, and as the dominant narrative in climate discussions, they do not require or allow a radical reimagining of society based around climate justice for all.

The message we receive – namely, to put our faith in a few market tweaks – acts to hem everyone into that political mindset, constricting our field of vision. "We only create that which we can imagine," says brown. "It behooves those currently in power to dominate the imaginal space, to continue to imagine futures of dominance, of extremely slow (regressive, even) motion towards justice. Which, of course, makes it imperative that we who are directly impacted, taking leadership from the most vulnerable communities, imagine through and beyond our oppression."

"[T]he post-apocalyptic shape-shifting city known as Detroit," as brown once wrote about her home, has become a hotbed of this kind of visionary practice and action. For example, when the city went broke and repossessed the street lamps, people created an initiative called Soulardarity, setting up community-controlled solar lighting to keep their streets lit at night.

Numerous Indigenous communities, commonly ignored in mainstream environmental discourse, are simultaneously stopping fossil fuel projects and forging low-carbon futures. The Unist'ot'en Camp is stopping pipelines and going back to the land – fishing, foraging, hunting, building – on their unceded territories on the West Coast. In the heart of the tarsands, the Lubicon Lake First Nation is installing solar, and North Caribou Lake First Nation near Kenora, Ontario, is likewise loading up on solar to get off diesel.

"I believe we have to release new ideas and practices into the stream," says brown, "[and] pay attention to the cumulative effect of many small changes."

In this line of thinking, there won't be one massive, coordinated, Manhattan Project-esque effort starting tomorrow to shift everything, but rather waves of visionary disturbance.

For this to open up major radical possibilities, the ideas, projects, and voices of those most affected by climate colonialism must be supported and amplified – specifically, the contributions of Indigenous and racialized women. Those who currently dominate the conversation can help by stepping out of the way. Some currently influential folks, like Bill McKibben and Naomi Klein, are working to amplify other voices. But many privileged leaders won't give up their space, and the grassroots will need to seize control of the narrative from them.

No longer can intimate knowledge of the planet and of the emotional labour that holds communities together be swept away and discarded amid sterile, monotonous discussions of climate policy. We cannot afford the harm this does to our collective imaginations. The blockages stopping us from seeing and realizing a just low-carbon future are being chipped away at, but much work is needed to break the dam. ★



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